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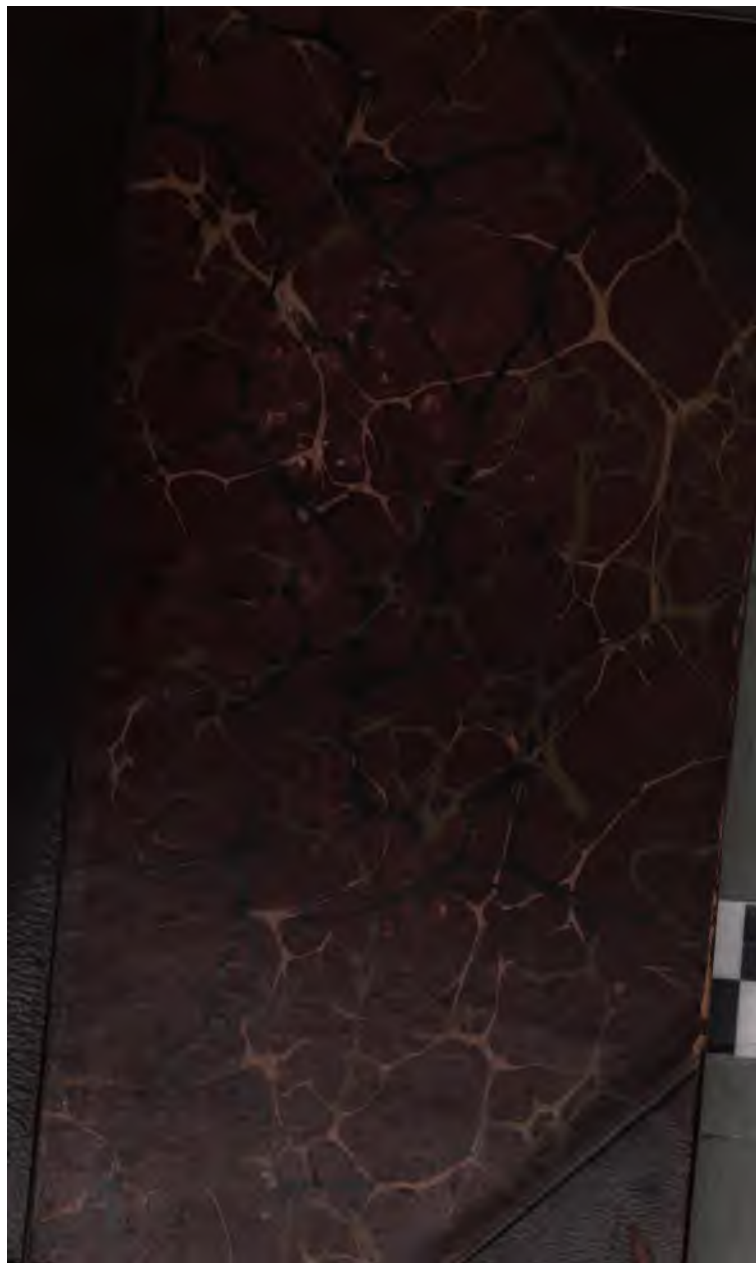
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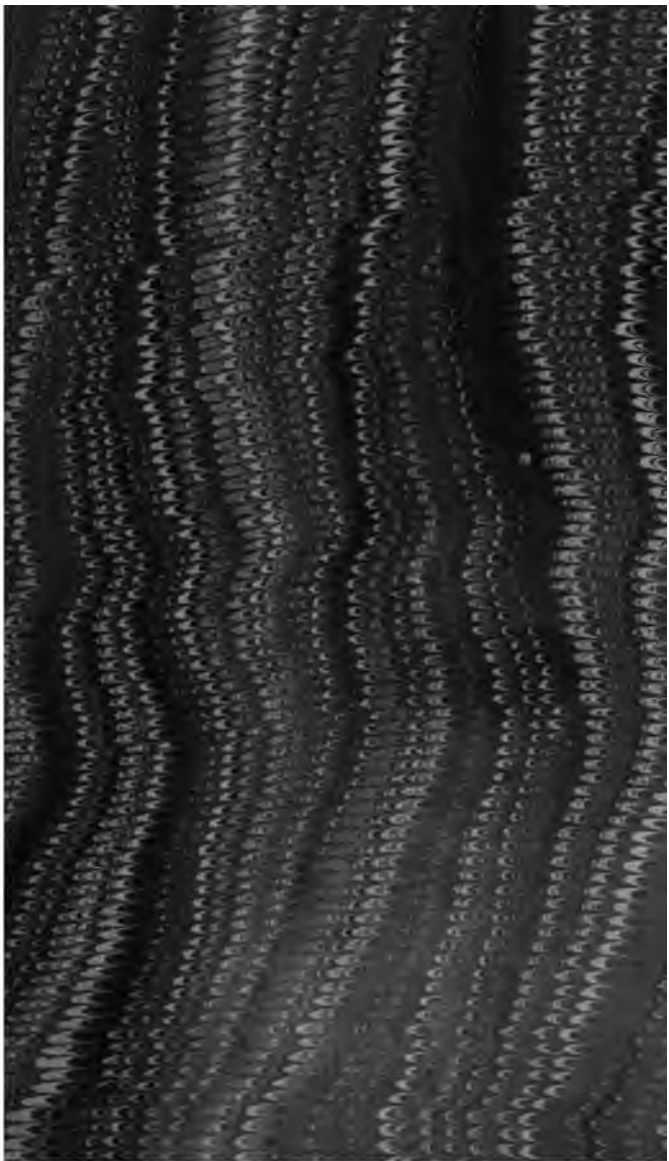


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# LAYS OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

By JOHN STUART BLACKIE

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

STRAHAN & CO.

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### ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME of the poems in this volume appeared previously in the "Lays and Legends of Ancient Greece;" but that work has been long out of print, and will not be published again in its original shape.



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE BARONESS BURDETT COUTTS.

---

High-fortuned lady, bountiful and kind,  
Whom to behold is to be touched with good,  
Whom in her proud heart England holds enshrined,  
Pure type of noblest Christian womanhood !  
As a poor child from grassy down may cull  
A wilding bloom on which a thronèd queen  
Shall smile, and justly deem more beautiful  
Than all the stars that gem the courtly scene ;  
So thou in thy great march of gracious deeds,  
And loving triumphs which subdue all foes,  
Slight not the poet ; though for human needs  
His empty hand no healing bounty shows,  
His soulful songs do scatter fruitful seeds  
On breezy wing, whence godlike virtue grows.

OBAN,

*July 8, 1872.*

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# LAYS OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

---

## IONA.

---

### THE VOYAGE OF COLUMBA.

#### I.

“SON of Brendan, I have willed it ;  
I will leave this land and go  
To a land of savage mountains,  
Where the Borean breezes blow ;  
To a land of rainy torrents,  
And of barren, treeless isles,  
Where the winter frowns are lavish,  
And the summer scanty smiles ;  
I will leave this land of bloodshed,  
Where fierce brawls and battles sway,  
And will preach God's peaceful Gospel  
In a grey land, far away.”

Beathan spake, the son of Brendan—

“Son of Phelim, art thou wise?

Wilt thou change the smiling Erin,

For the scowling Pictish skies?

Thou, the lealest son of Erin,

Thou, a prince of royal line,

Sprung by right descent from mighty

Neill, whose hostages were nine?

Wilt thou seek the glens of Albyn,

For repose from loveless strife?

Glens, where feuds, from sire to grandson,

Fan the wasteful flame of life?

Wilt thou leave a land of learning,

Home of ancient holy lore,

To converse with uncouth people,

Fishing on a shelvy shore?

Wilt thou leave the homes of Gartan,

Where thou suck'd the milky food

From the mother-breast of Aithne,

Daughter of Lagenian blood?

Wilt thou leave the oaks of Derry,

Where each leaf is dear to thee,

Wandering, in a storm-tost wherry,

O'er the wide, unpastured sea ?  
Son of Phelim, Beathan loves thee,  
Be thou zealous, but be wise !  
There be heathens here in Erin ;  
Preach to them 'neath kindly skies."  
Then the noble son of Phelim,  
With the big tear in his eye,  
To the blameless son of Brendan  
Firmly thus made swift reply—  
" Son of Brendan, I have heard thee,  
Heard thee with a bleeding heart ;  
For I love the oaks of Derry,  
And to leave them gives me smart ;  
But the ban of God is on me,  
Not my will commands the way ;  
Molaise priest of Innishmurry  
Hights me go, and I obey.  
For their death is heavy on me  
Whom I slew in vengeful mood,  
At the battle of Culdremhne,  
In the hotness of my blood.  
For the lord that rules at Tara,  
In some brawl that grew from wine,

Slew young Carnan, branch of promise,  
And a kinsman of my line ;  
And the human blood within me  
Mounted, and my hand did slay,  
For the fault of one offender  
Many on that tearful day ;  
And I soil'd the snow-white vestment  
With which Etchen, holy man,  
Clonfad's mitred elder, clad me  
When I join'd the priestly clan ;  
And my soul was rent with anguish,  
And my sorrows were increased,  
And I went to Innishmurry,  
Seeking solace from the priest.  
And the saintly Molaise told me—  
' For the blood that thou hast spilt,  
God hath shown me one atonement  
To make clear thy soul from guilt ;  
Count the hundreds of the Christians  
Whom thy sword slew to thy blame,  
Even so many souls of heathens  
Must thy word with power reclaim ;  
Souls of rough and rude sea-rovers,

Used to evil, strange to good,  
Picts beyond the ridge of Albyn,  
In the Pagan realm of Brude.  
Thou hast heard me, son of Brendan ;  
I have will'd it ; and this know,  
Thou with me, or I without thee,  
On this holy hest will go !”  
Beathan heard, with meek agreement,  
For he knew that Colum's will,  
Like a rock against the ocean,  
Still was fix'd for good or ill.  
“Son of Phelim, I have heard thee ;  
I and Cobhtach both will go,  
Past the wintry ridge of Albyn,  
O'er the great sea's foamy flow ;  
Far from the green oaks of Derry,  
Where the cuckoo sings in May,  
From the land of falling waters  
Far, and clover's green display ;  
Where Columba leads we follow,  
Fear with him I may not know,  
Where the God thou servest calls thee,  
Son of Phelim, I will go.”

## II.

“Son of Brendan, I am ready ;  
Is the boat all staunch and trim ?  
Light our osier craft and steady,  
Like an ocean gull to swim !  
I have cast all doubt behind me,  
Seal'd with prayer my holy vow,  
And the God who heard me answers  
With assuring presence now.”  
And the son of Brendan answer'd—  
“Son of Phelim, thou shalt be  
Like God's angel-guidance to us  
As we plough the misty sea.  
We are ready, I and Cobhtach,  
Diarmid in thy service true,  
Rus and Fechno, sons of Rodain,  
Scandal, son of Bresail, too ;  
Ernan, Luguid Mocatheimne,  
Echoid, and Tochannu brave,  
Grillan and the son of Branduh,  
Brush with thee the briny wave.”  
Thus spake he : Columba lifted

High his hand to bless the wherry,  
And they oar'd with gentle oarage  
From the dear-loved oaks of Derry ;  
Loath to leave each grassy headland,  
Shiny beach and pebbly bay,  
Thymy slope and woody covert,  
Where the cuckoo hymn'd the May ;  
Loath from some familiar cabin's  
Wreathy smoke to rend their eye,  
Where a godly widow harbour'd  
Laughing girl or roguish boy.  
On they oar'd, and soon behind them  
Left thy narrow pool, Loch Foyle,  
And the grey sea spread before them  
Many a broad unmeasured mile.  
Swiftly now on bounding billow  
On they run before the gale,  
For a strong south-wester blowing  
Strain'd the bosom of their sail.  
On they dash : the Rhinns of Islay  
Soon they reach, and soon they pass ;  
Cliff and bay, and bluffy foreland,  
Flit as in a magic glass.



What is this before them rising  
Northward from the foamy spray?  
Land, I wis—an island lorded  
By the wise Macneill to-day,  
Then a brown and barren country,  
Cinctured by the ocean grey.\*  
On they scud; and there they landed,  
And they mounted on a hill,  
Whence the far-viewed son of Brendan  
Look'd, and saw green Erin still.  
“Say'st thou so, thou son of Brendan?”  
Quoth Columba; “then not here  
May we rest from tossing billow  
With light heart and conscience clear,  
Lest our eyes should pine a-hunger  
For the land we hold so dear,  
And our coward keel returning  
Stint the vow that brought us here.”  
So they rose and trimmed their wherry,  
And their course right on they hold  
Northward, where the wind from Greenland

\* The island of Colonsay, south of Mull, from which the present Lord Colonsay takes his title.

Blows on Albyn clear and cold ;  
When, behold, a cloud came darkling  
From the west, with gusty blore,  
And the horrent waves rose booming  
Eastward, with ill-omen'd roar ;  
And the night came down upon them,  
And the sea with yeasty sweep  
Hiss'd around them, as the wherry  
Stagger'd through the fretted deep.  
Eastward, eastward, back they hurried,  
For to face the flood was vain,  
Every rib of their light wherry  
Creaking to the tempest's strain ;  
Eastward, eastward, till the morning  
Glimmer'd through the pitchy storm,  
And reveal'd the frowning Scarba,  
And huge Jura's cones enorm.  
"Blessed God," cried now Columba,  
"Here, indeed, may danger be  
From the mighty whirl and bubble  
Of the cauldron of the sea ;  
Here it was that noble Breacan  
Perish'd in the gulping wave—

Here we, too, shall surely perish,  
If not God be quick to save !”  
Spake : and with his hand he lifted  
High the cross above the brine ;  
And he cried, “ Now, God, I thank Thee  
Thou hast sent the wished-for sign !  
For, behold, thou son of Brendan,  
There upon the topmost wave,  
Sent from God, a sign to save us  
Float the bones of Breacan brave !  
And his soul this self-same moment,  
From the girth of purging fire,  
Leaps redeem’d, as we are ’scaping  
From the huge sea-cauldron dire.”  
Spake : and to the name of Breacan  
Droop’d the fretful-crested spray ;  
And full soon a mild south-easter  
Blew the surly storm away.\*

\* The legend about the bones of Breacan is of course taken from the old Latin book, otherwise it had no title to be here. In Gaelic, the first element of the compound word *corryvreckan* means a *cauldron*, and the other element *breac* means *spotted* : so that etymologically the name seems only to mean the whirl or cauldron of the sea spotted with foam.

## III.

Little now remains to tell ye,  
Gentles, of great Phelim's son ;  
How he clave the yielding billow  
Till Iona's strand he won.  
Back they steer'd, still westward, westward ;  
Past the land where high Ben More  
Nods above the isles that quaintly  
Fringe its steep and terraced shore.  
On they cut—still westward ! westward !  
On with favouring wind and tide,  
Past the pillar'd crags of Carsaig  
Fencing Mull's sun-fronting side,  
Pass the narrow Ross, far-stretching  
Where the rough and ruddy rocks  
Rudely rise in jumbled hummocks  
Of primeval granite blocks ;  
Till they come to where Iona  
Rears her front of hoary crags,  
Fenced by many a stack and skerry  
Full of rifts, and full of jags ;  
And behind a small black islet

Through an inlet's narrow space,  
Sail'd into a bay white bosom'd,  
In the island's southward face.  
Then with eager step they mounted  
To the high rock's beetling brow—  
“Canst thou see, thou far-view'd Beathan,  
Trace of lovely Erin now?”  
“No! thou son of Phelim, only  
Mighty Jura's Paps I see,  
These and Isla's Rhynns, but Erin  
Southward lies in mist from me.”  
“Thank thee, God!” then cried Columba;  
“Here our vows are paid, and here  
We may rest from tossing billow,  
With light heart and conscience clear.”  
Downward then their way they wended  
To the pure and pebbly bay,  
And, with holy cross uplifted,  
Thus did saintly Colum say—  
“In the sand we now will bury  
This trim craft that brought us here,  
Lest we think on oaks of Derry,  
And the land we hold so dear;

Then they dug a trench, and sank it  
In the sand, to seal their vow,  
With keel upwards, as who travels  
In the sand may see it now.

## THE DEATH OF COLUMBA.

SAXON stranger, thou did'st wisely,  
Sunder'd for a little space  
From that motley stream of people  
Drifting by this holy place ;  
With the furnace and the funnel  
Through the long sea's glancing arm,  
Let them hurry back to Oban,  
Where the tourist loves to swarm.  
Here, upon this hump of granite,  
Sit with me a quiet while,  
And I'll tell thee how Columba  
Died upon this old grey isle.

### I.

'Twas in May, a breezy morning,  
When the sky was fresh and bright,  
And the broad blue ocean shimmer'd  
With a thousand gems of light.

On the green and grassy Machar,  
Where the fields are spredden wide,  
And the crags in quaint confusion  
Jut into the Western tide :  
Here his troop of godly people,  
In stout labour's garb array'd,  
Blithe their fruitful task were plying  
With the hoe and with the spade.  
" I will go and bless my people,"  
Quoth the father, " ere I die,  
But the strength is slow to follow  
Where the wish is swift to fly ;  
I am old and feeble, Diarmid,  
Yoke the oxen, be not slow,  
I will go and bless my people,  
Ere from earth my spirit go."  
On his ox-drawn wain he mounted,  
Faithful Diarmid by his side ;  
Soon they reach'd the grassy Machar,  
Soft and smooth, Iona's pride :  
" I am come to bless my people,  
Faithful fraters, ere I die ;  
I had wish'd to die at Easter,



But I would not mar your joy,  
Now the Master plainly calls me,  
Gladly I obey his call ;  
I am ripe, I feel the sickle,  
Take my blessing ere I fall.”  
But they heard his words with weeping,  
And their tears fell on the dew,  
And their eyes were dimmed with sorrow,  
For they knew his words were true.  
Then he stood up on the waggon,  
And his prayerful hands he hove,  
And he spake and bless'd the people  
With the blessing of his love :  
“ God be with you, faithful fraters,  
With you now, and evermore ;  
Keep you from the touch of evil,  
On your souls his Spirit pour ;  
God be with you, fellow-workmen,  
And from loved Iona's shore  
Keep the blighting breath of demons,  
Keep the viper's venom'd store ! ”  
Thus he spake, and turn'd the oxen  
Townwards ; sad they went, and slow,

And the people, fix'd in sorrow,  
    Stood, and saw the father go.

## II.

List me further, Saxon stranger,  
Note it nicely, by the causeway  
    On the left hand, where thou came  
With the motley tourist people,  
    Stands a cross of figured fame.  
Even now thine eye may see it,  
    Near the nunnery, slim and grey ;—  
From the waggon there Columba  
    Lighted on that tearful day,  
And he sat beneath the shadow  
    Of that cross, upon a stone,  
Brooding on his speedy passage  
    To the land where grief is none ;  
When, behold, the mare, the white one  
    That was wont the milk to bear  
From the dairy to the cloister,  
    Stood before him meekly there,  
Stood, and softly came up to him,  
    And with move of gentlest grace

O'er the shoulder of Columba

Thrust her piteous-pleading face,  
Look'd upon him as a friend looks

On a friend that goes away,  
Sunder'd from the land that loves him  
By wide seas of briny spray.

"Fie upon thee for thy manners!"

Diarmid cried with lifted rod,  
"Wilt thou with untimely fondness  
Vex the prayerful man of God?"

"Not so, Diarmid," cried Columba;

"Dost thou see the speechful eyne  
Of the fond and faithful creature

Sorrow'd with the swelling brine?  
God hath taught the mute unreasoning  
What thou fail'st to understand,

That this day I pass for ever

From Iona's shelly strand.

Have my blessing, gentle creature,

God doth bless both man and beast;  
From hard yoke, when I shall leave thee,  
Be thy faithful neck released."

Thus he spoke, and quickly rising

With what feeble strength remain'd,  
Leaning on stout Diarmid's shoulder,  
A green hillock's top he gained.  
There, or here where we are sitting,  
Whence his eye might measure well  
Both the cloister and the chapel,  
And his pure and prayerful cell.  
There he stood, and high uplifting  
Hands whence flowed a healing grace,  
Breathed his latest voice of blessing  
To protect the sacred place,—  
Spake such words as prophets utter  
When the veil of flesh is rent,  
And the present fades from vision,  
On the germinating future bent :  
"God thee bless, thou loved Iona,  
Though thou art a little spot,  
Though thy rocks are grey and treeless,  
Thine shalt be a boastful lot ;  
Thou shalt be a sign for nations ;  
Nurtured on thy sacred breast,  
Thou shalt send on holy mission  
Men to teach both East and West ;

Peers and potentates shall own thee,  
Monarchs of wide-sceptre'd sway  
Dying shall beseech the honour  
To be tomb'd beneath thy clay ;  
God's dear saints shall love to name thee,  
And from many a storied land  
Men of clerkly fame shall pilgrim  
To Iona's little strand."

## III.

Thus the old man spake his blessing ;  
Then, where most he loved to dwell,  
Through the well-known porch he enter'd  
To his pure and prayerful cell ;  
And then took the holy psalter—  
'Twas his wont when he would pray—  
Bound with three stout clasps of silver,  
From the casket where it lay ;  
There he read with fixed devoutness,  
And with craft full fair and fine,  
On the smooth and polish'd vellum  
Copied forth the sacred line,  
Till he came to where the kingly

Singer sings in faithful mood,  
How the younglings of the lion  
Oft may roam in vain for food,  
But who fear the Lord shall never  
Live and lack their proper good.\*  
Here he stopped, and said, " My latest  
Now is written ; what remains  
I bequeath to faithful Beathan  
To complete with pious pains."  
Then he rose, and in the chapel  
Conned the pious vesper song  
Inly to himself, for feeble  
Now the voice that once was strong ;  
Hence with silent step returning  
To his pure and prayerful cell,  
On the round smooth stone he laid him  
Which for pallet served him well.  
Here some while he lay ; then rising,  
To a trusty brother said :  
" Brother, take my parting message,  
Be my last words wisely weigh'd.  
'Tis an age of brawl and battle ;

\* Psalm xxxiv. 10.

Men who seek not God to please,  
With wild sweep of lawless passion  
Waste the land and scourge the seas.  
Not like them be ye ; be loving,  
Peaceful, patient, truthful, bold,  
But in service of your Master  
Use no steel and seek no gold.”  
Thus he spake ; but now there sounded  
Through the night the holy bell  
That to Lord’s-day matins gather’d  
Every monk from every cell.  
Eager at the sound, Columba  
In the way foresped the rest,  
And before the altar kneeling,  
Pray’d with hands on holy breast.  
Diarmid followed ; but a marvel  
Flow’d upon his wondering eyne,—  
All the windows shone with glorious  
Light of angels in the shrine.  
Diarmid enter’d ; all was darkness.  
“ Father ! ” But no answer came.  
“ Father ! art thou here, Columba ? ”  
Nothing answer’d to the name.

Soon the troop of monks came hurrying,  
Each man with a wandering light,  
For great fear had come upon them,  
And a sense of strange affright.  
“Diarmid ! Diarmid ! is the father  
With thee ? Art thou here alone ?”  
And they turn’d their lights and found him  
On the pavement lying prone.  
And with gentle hands they raised him,  
And he mildly look’d around,  
And he raised his arm to bless them,  
But it dropped upon the ground ;  
And his breathless body rested  
On the arms that held him dear,  
And his dead face look’d upon them  
With a light serene and clear ;  
And they said that holy angels  
Surely hover’d round his head,  
For alive no loveliest ever  
Look’d so lovely as this dead.

Stranger, thou hast heard my story,  
Thank thee for thy patient ear ;



We are pleased to stir the sleeping  
Memory of old greatness here.  
I have used no gloss, no varnish,  
To make fair things fairer look ;  
As the record stands, I give it,  
In the old monks' Latin book.  
Keep it in thy heart, and love it,  
Where a good thing loves to dwell ;  
It may help thee in thy dying,  
If thou care to use it well.

## SONNETS.

### I.

#### THE TOURISTS.

WHAT brought them here across the briny pool,  
A motley train of high and low degree,  
Grave seniors, girls whose blue eyes flash with glee,  
White-collar'd priests, and boys uncaged from school ?  
I know not—happy if themselves can tell ;  
No sights are here to trap the vulgar eye,  
No dome whose gilded cross invades the sky,  
No palace where wide-sceptred Cæsars dwell.  
An old grey chapel on an old grey beach,  
Grey waste of rocks unpictured by a tree,  
And far as hungry vision's range can reach,  
The old grey mist upon the old grey sea :  
These shows for sense ; but the deep truth behind  
They only know who read the mind with mind.

II.

THE ROYAL SAINT.

PRAISE me no Cæsars, Alexanders, all

Who whet sharp swords to reap great names in story,  
Napoleons, Fredericks, men who fill the hall

Of fame with echoes which the French call glory !  
True glory he reap'd with his saintly band

Who fled from pomp of courts and flash of spears,  
To win lost souls on this storm-batter'd strand,

With loving venture, prayers, and precious tears.  
No herald shrill'd sharp fear his path before,

No wasteful fire made deserts where he came,  
No trail of victories sign'd his march with gore,

No dinsome triumph peal'd his dreaded name ;  
But shod with peace, and wing'd with fervour, he  
Unlock'd all hearts ; for Love gave him the key.

III.

THE LORD'S DAY IN IONA.

PURE worshipper, who on this holy day  
Would'st shake thee free from soul-encrusting cares,  
And to the great Creator homage pay  
In some high fane most worthy of thy prayers,  
Go not where sculptured tower or pictured dome  
Invites the reeking city's jaded throngs,  
Some hoar old shrine of Rhine-land or of Rome,  
Where the dim aisle the languid hymn prolongs ;  
Here rather follow me, and take thy stand  
By the grey cairn that crowns the lone Dun Ee,  
And let thy breezy worship be the grand  
Old Bens, and old grey knolls that compass thee,  
The sky-blue waters, and the snow-white sand,  
And the quaint aisles far-sown upon the sea.

IV.

MOONLIGHT.

THOU mystic moon that o'er the dim grey sound  
Ray'st forth a yellow stream of thin cold light,  
If aught thou hast of knowledge more profound  
That told might profit bring to mortal wight,  
Tell me : if not, why should I rack my wit  
To shape me what thou art, or whither bound,  
Or what strange souls, for fleshly coil unfit  
Find a meet lodgment on thy spotted round ?  
Dream dreams who will beneath the glimmering moons,  
And commune with dim ghosts that flit about,  
I have no brains to waste on hazy runes,  
That being read but stir more doubtful doubt ;  
Shine on me, Sun ! beneath thy clear strong ray  
To live and work is all the bliss I pray.


## THE BOULDER.

WHENCE comest thou ? The rest are black, but thou  
Art rough and red as any Roy MacGregor,  
And show'st as strangely on this spot, I vow,  
As in white Washington a sooty nigger !  
Say, wert thou roll'd o'er from the ruddy Ross  
By Noah's flood, when God was wroth with men,  
Or, when the giants play'd at pitch and toss  
Wert thou the counter for their gambling then ?  
I know not : but what men who read the rocks  
Propound, that Nature in her crude display  
Of Titan strength with blocks high-heap'd on blocks  
Made glorious sport, before Sire Adam's day,  
May well be true ; and, when the young sun shone,  
Some travelling iceberg dropped this mighty stone.

VI.

THE DISAPPOINTED TOURIST.

AND is this all? And I have seen the whole,  
Cathedral, chapel, nunnery, and graves !  
'Tis scanty worth the tin, upon my soul,  
Or the long travel through the tumbling waves !  
There's nothing now, but to sit down and smoke  
A pipe on this grey channel's shelving brink.  
"There you are right," quoth I, to him who spoke,  
"Not much is here to see, but much to think ;  
If you'll but sit and read the old monk's book,  
Making the shifting shows of time your theme,  
And through the haze of centuries brooding look  
Till cunning Fancy shape the featured dream,  
Then learn what men served God in this lone nook  
Nobly, without gas, newspapers, or steam."



## MULL.

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### A PSALM OF BEN MORE.

How beautiful upon the mountains, Lord,  
Is Earth, thy world, how beautiful and grand !  
Ofttimes with firm unwearied foot I clomb  
The old grey Ben, whose peak serene look'd down  
In glory on the light careering clouds  
That swept the nearer heights ; but never fill'd  
My wondering eye such pomp of various view  
As now, from thy storm-shatter'd brow, Ben More.  
How fearful from this high sharp-riven rim  
To look down thy precipitous forehead seam'd  
With scars from countless storms, whence to the plain  
In long grim lines the livid ruin falls,  
And think how with a touch the involving blast  
From the rude North might seize such thing as I,  
And whirl me into dust in that black glen,



Sown with destruction ! But such danger now  
Touches not me, when in her gentle mood  
Nature, all robed in light, and shod with peace,  
Upon the old foundations of her strength  
Sits like a queen. How glorious in the West  
The sheen of ocean lies, the boundless breadth  
Of gleaming waves that girdle in the globe  
With their untainted virtue, strangely cut  
By rocky terraces projecting far  
In measured tiers, and long-drawn sprawling arms  
Of huge-slabbed granite huddled into knobs,  
And studded, far as the rapt eye can reach,  
With isle and islet sown in sportive strength,  
Even as the sky with stars—the sandy Coll  
Tiree-tway-parted, and the nearer group  
Of Ulva, Gometra, and Lunga's isle,  
And the flat Pladda, and the steep Cairnburg,  
Where erst the Norseman, monarch of the main,  
His sea-girt castle kept ; and stout Maclean  
Cromwell's harsh might defied, and planted proud  
The flag of Charles, and on the ill-starred clans  
Brought loss and harm, and crown'd authority's  
Retributive mace. But chiefly, thy dark mass

Enchains my view, in pillared beauty rare,  
• World-famous Staffa, by the dædal hand  
Of Titan Nature piled in rhythmic state,  
A fane for gods, and with the memory wreathed  
Of Fingal, and the ancient hero-kings  
Whom Ossian sang to the wild ringing notes  
Of his old Celtic harp, when Celtic songs  
Were mighty in the land, and stirred the soul  
Of generous clanship in the men who strode  
Their native hills with pride, a prosperous race,  
Now few and poor by Saxon lords controlled,  
Shorn of their glens, and dwindling fast away  
Into a name. Nor less thy old grey line,  
Iona, holds my gaze, where late I trod  
The grave of kings, and by the figured cross  
Stood reverent, raised by grateful piety  
To the adventurous Saint, who launched his bark  
From Erin's clerkly shore, nor looked behind,  
Till he had made that harsh grey rock a school  
For gentleness and tenderness and truth  
And Gospel charms to tame mistempered souls  
Through all the savage North. Hence veering round  
Southward, Cantire's long arm, and Islay's heights

And lofty Jura's towering tops stand out  
Majestic, and the quaint green-vested knolls  
Of sheep-cropped Lorn, and Oban's quiet bay  
Beloved of boats. And with more distant sweep  
Eastward the strong sky-cleaving Grampians rise  
From Arroquhar's heights to Cruachan's shapely peaks  
And Buchaill's fair green cone, and thy huge bulk  
Broad-breasted Nevis, and the mighty host  
Of granite battlements that look sternly out  
On savage Skye, and with her stiffly bear  
The cuffs and buffets of the strong-armed blast  
From the still-vexed Atlantic, mother of rains.  
These be thy ramparts, Scotland, these the fence  
Which Nature raised, to keep thy children free  
From the invading Roman, and the pride  
Of power aggressive. O ! how lovely sleeps  
The Sun upon each soft green-mantled glen,  
By those grim bulwarks shielded, where the smoke  
From lonely hut in odorous birchen bower  
Signs the abode of men, the healthful home  
Whence breezy Scotland sends her hardy sons  
Far-venturing o'er the globe, to win much gold,  
And fair approval, and high-throned command,

And all that Earth, a willing tribute, yields  
To patient thought, strong will, prompt hand, and grasp  
Tenacious. Nor the fervid spirit here  
Fails, that beneath a cool impassive front  
Nurses the sacred flame, which bursts with power  
From Caledonian pulpits, strong to wake  
The sting of conscience in lethargic souls  
Long drugged to drowsy dullness, or enthralled  
By base convention.

But I feel the keen  
Uncustomed temper of the thin clear air  
On this dry peak, where no hot steams are bred,  
Creep with a gradual chillness through my frame ;  
And I must leave thy tale, thou mighty Ben,  
Half sung : nor mine, in sooth, the learned skill  
To chronicle the story of thy birth  
Portentous, then when God's high call redeemed  
The elements from chaos, and made Earth  
Start from the seas, and bade the mountains rise  
With giant fronts star-threatening, and deep glens  
Sundered from glens, and mighty plains from plains  
Remotely cast, abode with skill prepared  
By toilsome Nature's patient alchemy

For man, proud flower and fruitage of her growth.  
These grey-blue rocks in shattered fragments strewn  
Upon thy aged crown, if they could speak,  
Would tell a tale that science tempts in vain  
With many a lofty guess, and name the hour  
When the same chemic fire that smelts the bowels  
Of hot Vesuvius, 'neath her rocky ribs  
Mother of fertile ashes, heaved thy cones  
From the tremendous depths of boiling seas  
With subterranean thunders terrible,  
And tremulous quakings of the tortured Earth  
In her primeval throes ; and say what tribes  
Of monsters then first crawled in slimy beds  
Unshapely, or with hideous flapping vans  
Clove the thick air, and glared with great round eyes  
Through the gross mists, that from the labouring  
Earth

Rose feverous. Thus stirred by Titan force  
Sprang proud Ben More to being, what long space  
Of centuried ages, ere sire Adam first  
Greeted with glad surprise the genial day  
I know not, nor much reck. Enough that here,  
Last product of the slow-creating years,

Victors we stand, upon so vast a stage,  
Where human work well linked to work divine  
Creates new wonders daily ; I'm content.  
Let others probe the immense of Possibles  
With proud conjectures, stamping with the seal  
Of sacred truth each darling notion bred  
Of green conceit, and plumed with windy pride ;  
Such fair fantastic triumphs I forego,  
Sober to seek, and diligent to do  
My human work in this my human plot  
Of God's vast garden, all my joy to pluck  
The noisome weeds, and rear the fragrant rose,  
Not quarreling with its thorn.—Now fare thee well  
Thou far-viewed Ben ! and may the memoried pomp  
Of thy great grandeur make my smallness great,  
That in the strait and choking times of life  
I still may wear thy presence in my soul,  
And walk as in a kingly hall, hung round  
With living pictures from the proud Ben More  
Monarch of Mull, the fairest isle that spreads  
Its green folds to the Sun in Celtic seas.

## THE DUKE'S RETREAT.

FAREWELL the city's dust and din,  
The laboured pomp, the splendid rattle,  
The war without, the fret within,  
The ceaseless tug of selfish battle !  
I'll toss no more on seas of strife :  
But, drifting to a lonely shore,  
I'll slip into a peaceful life  
Beneath the shade of dark Ben More.

Green is Ben Tealladh's steepy side,  
And soft the splash of waters sounding,  
Where fair Loch Baa outspreads her pride,  
With fringe of leafy trees surrounding :  
There would I lie in careless ease,  
Stretched on the green and grassy shore,  
And nurse mild musings to the breeze  
That pipes around the dark Ben More.

What though the dress of state be far—  
Vain show to shallow thought appealing—  
The crown, the coronet, and star—  
The bait that lures the vulgar feeling !  
Here, of all cumbrous trappings bare,  
I wisely use my native store  
Of happy thoughts and fancies fair  
Beneath the shade of dark Ben More.

The brae, the billow, and the breeze,  
Feed Meditation's quiet rapture ;  
Or from the scripted rock at ease  
I spell Creation's natal chapter.  
The white mist folds its gentle wings  
Around the green hill's summit hoar,  
And all the power of growing things  
Breathes fragrance down from huge Ben More.

And when I wish to rouse the brain  
From Contemplation's dreamy pillow,  
I strive with artful fly to gain  
The speckled swimmer from the billow.



And in my rocking boat I sit,  
With busy wand and lazy oar,  
While shadows o'er the dark waves flit  
From the broad brow of huge Ben More.

Or, where the stag climbs there climb I,  
And where the noon-day cloud floats lightly,  
Number the green isles as they lie  
On the broad ocean glancing brightly ;  
And note Iona's sacred strand,  
Where Erin's venturous saint of yore,  
With prayerful heart and sleepless hand,  
Tamed the wild Heathens of Ben More.

And when the black squall from the hills  
Bristles the soft lake to a Fury,  
And down the steep the gathered rills,  
Swelled to a torrent, madly hurry ;  
Then round the cheerly blazing fire  
Flies the quick jest and merry roar,  
The louder for the tempest's ire  
That frowns on us from dark Ben More.


And thus I woo my Autumn ease,  
From intrigue far, and wordy squabble  
Of men, who vainly fret to please  
The whim of the unreasoned rabble.  
From courts and kings and camps aloof,  
Upon a mountain-girdled shore,  
I lurk beneath a lowly roof  
At the green base of dark Ben More.

## SONNETS.

### I.

#### BEN TEALLADH.

As sits a queen among her maids, so thou,  
Ben Tealladh, mid thy cirque of subject hills,  
Crowned not with mortal gold, but on thy brow  
With deathless verdure fresh from sky-born rills.  
Thou fairest vestal of the Western isles,  
Hath no bard yet linked thee to famous lays ;  
And was it left for me to wander miles  
And mar thy beauty with imperfect praise ?  
Come from your dim abodes, all men who pine  
In grimy chambers and dark inky dens,  
And look, and love this Queen of verdurous Bens !  
Trust me, the primal father of our line  
Saw no such Ben, from Eden's flowery girth,  
To feed his eyes with wonder at his birth.



II.

LOCH BAA.

LOVELY Loch Baa, had I, who spend my span  
In the hot pressure of a feverish time,  
Been born to tell my beads to churchly chime,  
When life was tempered to a prayerful plan,  
Here I had thatched my hut, secure of peace  
By the strong cincture of thy grassy hills,  
And by the vow whose chastening virtue kills  
Ambition, that makes cankering cares increase ;  
But sith I am the man I am, and where  
The Fate me planted, and the Will divine,  
I may but greet thee with a chance-breathed prayer  
And seal my homage with one loyal line—  
If heaven be fairer than thou art this day  
I know not, but with thee I'd rather stay.

III.

LOCH BAA: AGAIN.

“LOVELY Loch Baa!” so said I yesterday,  
Cradled and curtained by the soft green hills,  
As on thy sloping beach I twined my lay  
To the low murmur of thy tinkling rills.  
But now, O Heavens, what gusty horror swells  
Thy face, what blackness crowns thy fretful brow!  
And, like a rout of demons from thy dells,  
What battling blasts come headlong charging now!  
How changed, and yet the same! how strange, and yet  
How common! Nature hates perdurant peace,  
And in the strife which winds and waves beget  
From sweet somniferous sameness finds release;  
Then marvel not, nor deem the times ajar,  
If Celt with Teut, or Teut with Celt make war!

IV.

FAREWELL TO LOCH BAA.

FAREWELL, Loch Baa ! the summer's gone, and I  
Must go with it ; thy heavens are dark and drear,  
And the sad coronach of the widowed year,  
With many a mournful groan and solemn sigh,  
Trails through thy glens. Beneath sweet summer skies  
Each delicate hue, each fair fine-shadowed form  
Lived on thy face ; but now the pitiless storm  
Rakes thee with gashes, and thy beauty dies.  
Farewell ! Grief comes to all. I must depart.  
Not even the gods may stop the wheels of change ;  
Thou hast the better half of my poor heart  
Which loves thy bound, more than wide Nature's  
range.  
Roll swift, ye murky months, whose cruel law  
Takes light from Earth, and me from dear Loch Baa !

## BEN GREIG.

WHY climb the mountains ? I will tell thee why,

And, if my fancy jumps not with thy whim,

What marvel ? there is scope beneath the sky

For things that creep, and fly, and walk, and swim.

I love the free breath of the broad-wing'd breeze,

I love the eye's free sweep from craggy rim,

I love the free bird poised at lofty ease,

And the free torrent's far-upounding hymn ;

I love to leave my littleness behind,

In the low vale where little cares are great,

And in the mighty map of things to find

A sober measure of my scanty state,

Taught by the vastness of God's pictured plan

In the big world how small a thing is man !

## MULL WEATHER.

WEATHER!—why blame the weather? on the mountains  
Storm with the sunshine weaves the shifting show,  
While from the green braes leap the white-maned foun-  
tains

With lusty bicker to the vale below.  
I'd have him whipt back to the reeking town,  
Lord of some breezeless garret in the mews,  
Who ducks for shelter when the rain comes down,  
And picks his dainty path with shining shoes.  
Not so old Ossian, Celtic bard sublime,  
Who loved the floating mist and sailing gloom,  
And the swoln ocean-wave's far-murmuring boom,  
And in the hall of heroes piled a rhyme,  
Which on some battered peak a man shall sing,  
High-perched beneath the Eagle's stormy wing.



## THE RUINED CLACHAN.

AT Tobermory, o'er the hills  
I wandered, when the noon was sunny,  
Through oozy bogs and trickling rills,  
And hum of bees that roamed for honey.  
I wound my way through ferny maze,  
A light and random path pursuing,  
Till in the glen there met my gaze  
A clump of cottages in ruin.

My heart grew sad, my heart grew warm,  
The tears adown my cheeks came rolling,  
And in my breast there rose a storm  
That kicked at reason's cold controlling.  
Full in my thought there flashed to view  
The rare old life that here had vanished,  
The lusty thew, the heart so true,  
The love, the joy, the manhood banished !

---

Who drove them hence, O who was he  
Of hoarded rents a stern exactor,  
A titled loon of high degree,  
Close-fisted laird, or hard-faced factor?  
I may not know : but I disburse  
My bile on him, that ruthless actor,  
And curse him with a hearty curse,  
Close-fisted laird or hard-faced factor.

Yes, cursed be he, and cursed be all  
Who live for gold and counted pennies,  
Selling their souls to Satan's thrall,  
Who hooks his prey with glancing guineas,  
Who cheats the eye with glittering gains,  
The painted pomp of life bestowing,  
But leaves the blood within thy veins  
With frosted fountain feebly flowing.

And curst be all who keep the Bens  
For sheep and antlered rangers only,  
And leave the green and sheltered glens  
All houseless, tenantless, and lonely ;

Who love no men, who rear no race  
To serve their country, when we need them,  
Who for the land that knows their face  
Will draw the sacred sword of freedom !

If I had land, as I have none,  
The people round me I would gather,  
And every lad I'd call my son,  
And every lass should call me father ;  
And to each kilted cotter I  
Would say, with word so kind and clannish  
God bless you all to multiply,  
And Earth with Celtic seed replenish !

But I'm just what I am ; and so  
Will cease to dream of what I might be :  
From right beginning all did flow,  
And in the end all things will right be.  
A human tear is all I can,  
A human curse, though scarcely civil,  
A tear for all the oppressed of man,  
A curse for all that serve the devil !

## SKYE



### BLAVEN.

Blow wildly blasts round Blaven's jagged crown,  
And through sheer-yawning rifts  
Whistle and shriek, while the swift Cloud swoops down,  
And like a wild beast lifts  
Wrathful his sweeping tail ! Scowl, Blaven, scowl  
Black as black hell, and, while  
Deep in the cauldroned corry tempests growl,  
With thy gigantic pile  
Stand firm, and harshly seamed with gritty scars  
Thy stern-indented face,  
Display, defiant of all windy wars  
With savage grim grimace,  
While countless winters roll. I can rejoice  
Where battling blasts increase,

And from the harsh bray of the tempest's voice  
Can syllable sweet peace.  
To-morrow, when the storm's hot puffing fit  
Hath blown itself to rest,  
A little child leading a lamb might sit  
Harmless upon thy crest.  
Oft have I seen Coruisk's dark-rounded lake,  
That, like a hell-pot lies  
Brewing commotion, sudden radiance take  
From the discurtained skies,  
And like a cushioned and a cradled thing  
With beauty dimpled o'er,  
Lie wreathed in lazy smiles, feeble to fling  
One ripple to the shore.  
There is a soul in Nature that delights  
In peace, and peaceful moods,  
Which still she finds from every storm that smites  
The Bens, or shakes the woods ;  
A Sabbath tune she hath which most she loves,  
And to herself doth sing  
Secure, behind the crash of rended groves  
And clang of winter's wing.  
Such Sabbath tune the wise man's heart doth know

Through all the week day din,  
And raptured hears the heavenly cadence flow  
Of angel songs within,  
What time Rebellion sets the state ajar  
And Chaos conquers Law,  
And on life's squandered fountains hungry War  
Engluts his tiger-maw.  
Terrific now the rainful power streams down  
And with tremendous flail  
Lashes thy battered ribs, and rifted crown,  
In adamantine mail  
Prodigious cased : the sudden torrent swells  
Huge from its birth, and pours  
With arrowy force into the sounding dells  
Thy ruin's crumbled stores  
Precipitous, and spreads the plain below  
With slime and fertile dust,  
Thy spoil, the soil for gentle life to grow  
From thy obdurate crust.  
Thus the harsh-blustering storm prepares the path  
For plough and peaceful spade,  
And hard-faced Blaven snorting in his wrath,  
A genial bed hath made,

Where herbs shall spring, and delicate hands shall  
bind

The various-painted flower,  
And children play, and old men walk, and find  
Rest in the odorous bower.

These be Thy wonders, Lord, to pondering heart  
In storm and cloud revealed,  
Perpetual miracle, prolific art,  
From sceptic wit concealed ;

These shew to me, while humbly I would trace  
Through rich-confounding maze  
Thy reasoned plan, and with the angelic race  
Mingle weak human praise,  
To Him who sits supreme in righteous state  
Above man's partial mood,  
And worketh peace from storm, and love from hate;  
And all He doth is good.

## ORKNEY.

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### THE OLD MAN OF HOY.

THE old man of Hoy  
Looks out on the sea,  
Where the tide runs strong and the wave rides free :  
He looks on the broad Atlantic sea,  
And the old man of Hoy  
Hath this great joy,  
To hear the deep roar of the wide blue ocean,  
And to stand unmoved 'mid the sleepless motion,  
And to feel o'er his head  
The white foam spread  
From the wild wave proudly swelling,  
And to care no whit  
For the storm's rude fit  
Where he stands on his old rock-dwelling,  
This rare old man of Hoy.



The old man of Hoy  
Looks out on the sea,  
Where the tide runs strong and the wave rides free :  
He looks on the broad Atlantic sea,  
And the old man of Hoy  
Hath this great joy,  
To look on the flight of the wild sea-mew,  
With their hoar nests hung o'er the waters blue ;  
To see them swing  
On plunging wing,  
And to hear their shrill notes swelling,  
And with them to reply  
To the storm's war-cry,  
As he stands on his old rock-dwelling ;  
This rare old man of Hoy.

The old man of Hoy  
Looks out on the sea,  
Where the tide runs strong, and the wave rides free :  
He looks on the broad Atlantic sea,  
And the old man of Hoy  
Hath this great joy,  
When the sea is white, and the sky is black,

And the helmless ship drives on like wrack,

To see it dash

At his feet with a crash,

And the sailors' death-note knelling,

And to hear their shrieks

With pitiless cheeks,

This stern old man of Hoy.

The old man of Hoy

Looks out on the sea,

Where the tide runs strong, and the wave rides free :

He looks on the broad Atlantic sea,

And the old man of Hoy

Hath this great joy,

To think on the pride of the sea-kings old,

Harolds, and Ronalds, and Sigurds bold,

Whose might was felt,

By the cowering Celt,

When he heard their war-cry yelling ;

But the sea-kings are gone,

And he stands alone,

Firm on his old rock-dwelling,

This stout old man of Hoy.

The old man of Hoy  
Looks out on the sea,  
Where the tide runs strong and the wave rides free :  
He looks on the broad Atlantic sea,  
And the old man of Hoy  
Hath this great joy,  
To think on the gods that were mighty of yore,  
Braga, and Baldur, and Odin, and Thor,  
And giants of power  
In fateful hour,  
'Gainst the great gods rebelling :  
But the gods are all dead,  
And he rears his head  
Alone from his old rock-dwelling,  
This stiff old man of Hoy.

But listen to me,  
Old man of the sea,  
List to the Skulda that speaketh by me ;  
The Nornies are weaving a web for thee,  
Thou old man of Hoy,  
To ruin thy joy,  
And to make thee shrink from the lash of the ocean,

---

And teach thee to quake with a strange commotion,

When over thy head

And under thy bed

The rampant wave is swelling,

And thou shalt die

'Neath a pitiless sky,

And reel from thine old rock-dwelling,

Thou stout old man of Hoy !

THE DEATH OF HACO.

THE summer is gone, Haco, Haco,  
The yellow year is fled,  
And the winter is come, Haco,  
That numbers thee with the dead !

When the year was young, Haco, Haco,  
And the skies were blue and bright,  
Thou didst sweep the seas, Haco,  
Like a bird with wings of might.

With thine oaken galley proudly,  
And thy gilded dragon-prow,  
O'er the bounding billows, Haco,  
Like a sea-god thou didst go.

With thy barons gaily, gaily,  
All in proof of burnished mail,  
In the voes of Orkney, Haco,  
Thou didst spread thy prideful sail ;

And the sturdy men of Caithness,  
And the land of the Mackay,  
And the men of stony Parf, Haco,  
Knew that Norway's king was nigh.

And the men of outmost Lewis, Haco,  
And Skye, with winding kyles,  
And Macdougall's country, Haco,  
Knew the monarch of the isles.

And the granite peaks of Arran,  
And the rocks that fence the Clyde,  
Saw thy daring Norsemen, Haco,  
Ramping o'er the Scottish tide !

But scaith befell thee, Haco, Haco !  
Thou wert faithful, thou wert brave ;  
But not truth might shield thee, Haco,  
From a false and shuffling knave.

The crafty King of Scots, Haco,  
Who might not bar thy way,  
Beguiled thee, honest Haco,  
With lies that bred delay.

And hasty winter, Haco, Haco,  
Came and tripped the summer's heels,  
And rent the sails of Haco,  
And swamped his conquering keels.

Woe is me for Haco, Haco !  
On Lorn and Mull and Skye  
The hundred ships of Haco  
In a thousand fragments lie !

And thine oaken galley, Haco,  
That sailed with kingly pride,  
Came shorn and shattered, Haco,  
Through the foaming Pentland tide.

And thy heart sank, Haco, Haco,  
And thou felt that thou must die,  
When the bay of Kirkwall, Haco,  
Thou beheld with drooping eye.

And they led thee, Haco, Haco,  
To the bishop's lordly hall,  
Where thy woe-struck barons, Haco,  
Stood to see the mighty fall.

And the purple churchmen, Haco,  
    Stood to hold thy royal head,  
And good words of hope to Haco  
    From the Holy Book they read.

Then outspake the dying Haco,  
    “ Dear are God’s dear words to me,  
But read the book to Haco  
    Of the kings that ruled the sea.”

Then they read to dying Haco,  
    From the ancient Saga hoar,  
Of Holden and of Harold,  
    When his fathers worshipped Thor.

And they shrove the dying Haco,  
    And they prayed his bed beside ;  
And with holy unction Haco  
    Drooped his kingly head and died.

And in parade of death, Haco,  
    They stretched thee on thy bed,  
With a purple vest for Haco,  
    And a garland on his head.



And around thee, Haco, Haco,  
    Were tapers burning bright,  
And masses were sung for Haco  
    By day and eke by night.

And they bore thee, Haco, Haco,  
    To holy Magnus' shrine,  
And beside his sainted bones, Haco,  
    They chastely coffined thine.

And above thee, Haco, Haco,  
    To deck thy dreamless bed,  
All crisp with gold for Haco,  
    A purple pall they spread.

And around thee, Haco, Haco,  
    Where the iron sleep thou slept,  
Through the long dark winter, Haco,  
    A solemn watch they kept.

And at early burst of spring-time,  
    When the birds sang out with glee,  
They took the body of Haco  
    In a ship across the sea—

Across the sea to Norway,  
Where thy sires make moan for thee,  
That the last of his race was Haco,  
Who ruled the Western sea.

And they laid thee, Haco, Haco,  
With thy sires on the Norway shore,  
And far from the isles of the sea, Haco,  
That know thy name no more.

## STENNIS.

### I.

HERE on the green marge of the wrinkled lake  
Far-winding snake-like, north, south, east, and west,  
From these grey stones thy Sabbath sermon take,  
And in the lap of hoary memory rest !  
Who framed the cirque, who dug the moat, who sleeps  
'Neath the soft silence of the old green mound  
I shun to ask : Time, the stern warder, keeps  
The key of dateless secrets underground.  
This only know, when early man appeared,  
Scouring the brown heaths of these wind-swept isles,  
He had both thought and thews, and proudly reared  
These gaunt recorders of his brawny toils.  
Like him be thou ; and let thy work proclaim  
Thy strength, when Time forgets to spell thy name.

## STENNIS.

### II.

THESE old grey stones, what are they ?—pillars reared  
By men who lived and died in Orkney land,  
Long ere the footsteps shod with peace appeared,  
To plant the Cross on this surf-beaten strand ;  
Pillars that preach high thought and mightful hand  
Of men that bravely through grim ocean steered,  
And stoutly followed what they proudly planned  
Through sweat and blood, nor from their purpose  
veered.

What men ?—Celt or the Teut ?—I nothing care,  
My loves are with the living, not the dead ;  
But for strong men who knew to do and dare  
I drop the loyal tear and bow the head.  
Let gentle moons glide o'er the dumb grey stones  
That guard their graves !—I would not vex their bones.

“ Good sir, if you this mound admire  
Without so grassy green,  
Within ’twill prick your wonder more,  
And tax your wit, I ween.”

He spoke, and oped the massy door,  
And led the way to me,  
Thorough a passage long and low,  
With mighty masonrie

Right bravely fenced ; and soon beneath  
A chambered vault, we stood  
Of shapely stones with chilly glance  
Of earthy drip bedewed.

And where the glimmering torch was held—  
The tale I tell is true—  
A dragon shape upon the wall  
Uncouthly came to view.

A dragon of the scaly brood,  
Like dire Chimera old,  
Transfixed upon the bristling back  
By lance of hero bold.

A dragon dire, and eke a snake ;  
A snake, whose glittering twine  
Embraced a rod, like Hermes' wand,  
I saw with wondering eyne.

And right and left the cold dank wall  
Was lettered strangely round  
With scripture rude, to tell the tale  
Of him who built the mound.

But what it told of Saga old  
And stout sea-roving loons  
I might not know : much wiser men  
May spell the mystic Runes.

This only lore my beggar wit  
Could eathly understand,  
That mighty men had lived of yore,  
And died in Orkney land.

I left the chilly chamber then,  
And through the passage low  
I crept, and walked into the light  
Where healthful breezes blow ;

And in the bright blue sky rejoiced,  
And in the grassy sod,  
And far and free o'er Harra Moor  
With lightsome foot I trod.

## SHETLAND.



### BURRA FIORD.

(SONG.)

COME hither all ye Norsemen brave  
That ply the limber oar,  
We'll have a jolly pull to-day  
With you on the Shetland shore !  
Landlubbers we, and strange to boats ;  
But, if you'll bear a hand,  
We'll shake the dust from off our coats  
On the breezy Shetland strand.

(*Chorus.*) Pull away, pull away, ye jolly Norsemen !  
Where the sea-mew floats, and the kittiwake cries,  
And the dark-winged guillemots plunge and rise ;  
Pull away, pull away, pull away !



Come Jamieson, Johnson and Sandison,  
Come Josie that well may brag  
How he plucked the eagle by the throat  
From the face of the white sea-crag.  
O Josie, Josie ! break-neck loon,  
Where thy strong arms prevail  
We'll take the Fuggla by the crown,  
The Uytstack by the tail !  
(*Chorus.*) Pull away ! &c.

Now lightly neath the toppling rock,  
Ye jolly sailors brave,  
With bounding prow, we plough the deep  
And skim the sheeny wave ;  
While o'er our heads, a gamesome troop,  
The fowls that fish the sea,  
With plummy plunge and wavy swoop  
Come drifting merrily !  
(*Chorus.*) Pull away ! &c.

Now gently, gently dip your oars,  
Ye jolly sailors brave,  
While neath the rocky arch we pass.

And through the hollow cave,  
Where the puffins stand, a staring band,  
And wonder who we be  
That dare invade the fortress made  
For them on Shetland sea !  
(*Chorus.*) Pull away ! &c.

Now turn the helm, and with strong arm  
The sounding billows smite,  
And cross to Fuggla's jagged rock  
That shows the saviour-light,  
And bear us bravely o'er the bay  
Where the huge wave swells with pride,  
And cut your way through foam and spray  
Of the big Atlantic tide !  
(*Chorus.*) Pull away ! &c.

Now land, and scale the height which bears  
The sailor's radiant mark,  
The tower, by daring builders reared  
To guide the labouring bark,  
Where the tempest stalks with Titan stride,  
And the wave with thundering shock

Lashes the grim rock's furrowed side,  
And shakes the mighty block ;  
(*Chorus.*) Pull away ! &c.

Now on the top we stand ; and now  
Our share we proudly claim  
In this extremest horn of land  
That knows Victoria's name.  
God save the Queen !—her praise be told  
On Shetland's Northmost isle,  
With his, the master-builder bold  
Who raised this stable pile.

(*Chorus.*) Sing hurrah-rah-rah ! ye jolly Norsemen,  
Where the wild blasts blow, and the big waves roll,  
And the strong tower stands with its front to the pole ;  
Sing hurrah, sing hurrah, sing hurrah !

Now fare ye well, ye warders wise,  
Who watch this storm-vert shore !  
Backward we plough the heaving flood,  
And ply the limber oar.  
Landlubbers we, and strange to boats,

But, while we lift an arm,  
We'll keep a heart beneath our coats  
To Shetland seamen warm.

*(Chorus.)* Pull away, pull away, ye jolly Norsemen,  
Where the big tides roll, and the strong winds blow ;  
For the white fog comes, and we must go ;  
Pull away, pull away, pull away !

# ARGYLLSHIRE.



## GLENCOE.

A HISTORICAL BALLAD.

### I.

THE snow is white on the Pap of Glencoe,  
And all is bleak and dreary,  
But gladness reigns in the vale below,  
Where life is blithe and cheery,  
Where the old Macdonald, stout and true,  
Sits in the hall which his fathers knew,  
Sits, with the sword which his fathers drew  
On the old wall glancing clearly,  
Where the dry logs blaze on the huge old hearth,  
And the old wine flows that fans the mirth  
Of the friends that love him dearly.

Heavily, heavily lies the snow  
On the old grey ash and the old blue pine,

And the cold winds drearily drearily blow  
     Down the glen with a moan and a whine ;  
 But little reck they how the storm may bray,  
     Or the linn may roar in the glen,  
 Where the bright cups flow, and the light jests play,  
     And Macdonald is master of men,  
 Where Macdonald is king of the feast to-night,  
 And sways the hour with a landlord's right,  
 And broadens his smile, and opens his breast,  
 As a host may do to a dear-loved guest ;  
 And many a stirring tale he told  
     Of battle, and war, and chase,  
 And heroes that sleep beneath the mould,  
     The pride of his lordly race ;  
 And many a headlong venture grim,  
     With the hounds that track the deer,  
 By the rifted chasm's hanging rim  
     And the red-scaured mountain sheer.  
 And many a song did the harper sing  
     Of Ossian blind and hoary,  
 That made the old oak rafter ring  
     With the pulse of Celtic story ;  
 And the piper blew a gamesome reel

That the young blood hotly stirred,  
And they beat the ground with lightsome heel  
Till the midnight bell was heard.  
And then to rest they laid them down,  
And soon the strong sleep bound them,  
While the winds without kept whistling rout,  
And the thick snows drifted round them.

## II.

But one there was whose eye that night  
No peaceful slumber knew,  
Or, if he slept, he dreamt of blood,  
And woke by Coe's far-sounding flood,  
To make his dreaming true.  
A Campbell was he, of a hated clan,  
—God's curse be on his name!—  
Who to Macdonald's goodly glen  
On traitor's errand came.  
He had the old man's niece to wife,  
(A love that should have buried strife,)  
And shook his hand for faithful proof,  
And slept beneath his friendly roof;  
And he that night had shared the mirth

Around the old man's friendly hearth,  
 And, wise in devil's art,  
 Had laughed and quaffed, and danced and sung,  
 And talked with honey on his tongue,  
 And murder in his heart.  
 And now, to buy a grace from power  
 And men the slaves of the venal hour,  
 Or with the gust of blood to sate  
 A heart whose luxury was hate,  
 His hand was on the whetted knife  
 That thirsts to drink the old man's life ;  
 And soon the blood shall flow,  
 From which the curse shall grow,  
 That since the world to sin began  
 Pursues the lawless-handed man ;  
 And false Glen Lyon's traitor name  
 Shall live, a blazing badge of shame,  
 While memory links the crimson crime,  
 The basest in the book of Time,  
 With Campbell and Glencoe.

III.

'Tis five o'clock i' the morn ; of light



No glimmering ray is seen,  
And the snow that drifted through the night  
Shrouds every spot of green.  
Not yet the cock hath blown his horn,  
But the base red-coated crew  
Creep through the silence of the morn  
With butcher-work to do.  
And now to the old man's house they came,  
Where he lived in the strength of his proud old name,  
A brave unguarded life ;  
And now they enter the old oak room,  
Where he lay, all witless of his doom,  
In the arms of his faithful wife ;  
And through the grace of his hoary head,  
As he turned him starting from his bed,  
They shot the deadly-missioned lead,  
And reaved his purple life ;  
Then from the lady, where she lay  
With outstretched arms in blank dismay,  
They rove the vest, and in deray  
They flung her on the floor ;  
And from her quivering fingers tore  
With their teeth the rare old rings she wore ;

Then haled her down the oaken stair  
 Into the cold unkindly air,  
 And in the snow they left her there,  
     Where not a friend was nigh,  
 With many a curse, and never a tear,  
     Like an outcast beast to die.

IV.

And now the butcher-work went on  
 Hotly, hotly up the glen ;  
 For the order was given full sharply then  
 The lion to slay with the cubs in his den,  
     And never a male to spare ;  
 And the king's own hand had signed the ban,  
 To glut the hate of the Campbell clan,  
     And the spite of the Master of Stair.  
 From every clachan in long Glencoe  
 The shriek went up, and the blood did flow  
 Reeking and red on the wreathèd snow.  
 Every captain had his station  
 On the banks of the roaring water,  
 Watching o'er the butchered nation  
 Like the demons of the slaughter.

Lindsay raged at Invercoe,  
And laid his breathless twenty low ;  
At Inveruggen, Campbell grim  
Made the floor with gore to swim--  
Nine he counted in a row  
Brothered in a bloody show,  
And one who oft for him had spread  
The pillow 'neath his traitor head,  
    To woo the kindly rest.  
At Auchnachoin stern Barker pressed  
The pitiless work with savage zest,  
And on the broad mead by the water  
Heaped ten souls in huddled slaughter.  
The young man blooming in his pride,  
    The old man with crack'd breath,  
The bridegroom severed from his bride,  
And son with father side by side,  
    Lie swathed in one red death ;  
And Fire made league with Murder fell  
Where flung by many a raging hand,  
From house to house the flaming brand  
Contagious flew ; and crackling spar  
And crashing beam, make hideous jar,

And pitchy volumes swell.  
 What horror stalked the glen that day,  
 What ghastly fear and grim dismay,  
     No tongue of man may tell ;  
 What shame to Orange William's sway,  
 When Murder throve with honours decked,  
     And every traitor stood erect,  
     And every true man fell !

v.

'Tis twelve o'clock at noon ; and still  
 Heavily, heavily on the hill  
 The storm outwreaks his wintry will,  
     And flouts the blinded sun ;  
 And now the base red-coated crew,  
 And the fiends in hell delight to view  
     The sanguine slaughter done.  
 But where be they, the helpless troop,  
 Spared by red murder's ruthless swoop—  
 The feeble woman, the maiden mild,  
 The mother with her sucking child,  
     And all who fled with timely haste  
 From hissing shot, and sword uncased ?

Hurrying from the reeking glen,  
They are fled, some here, some there ;  
Some have scrambled up the Ben  
And crossed the granite ridges bare,  
And found kind word and helping hand  
On Appin's green and friendly strand ;  
Some in the huts of lone Glenure  
Found kindly care and shelter sure,  
And some in face of the tempest's roar,  
Behind the shelving Buchailmore,  
With stumbling foot did onward press  
To thy Ben-girdled nook ; Dalness ;  
And some huge Cruachan's peak behind  
Found a broad shield from drift and wind,  
And warmed their frozen frames at fires  
Kindled by friendly Macintyres.  
But most—O Heaven !—a feeble nation,  
Crept slowly from the mountain station ;  
The old, the sickly, and the frail,  
Went blindly on with straggling trail,  
The little tender-footed maid,  
The little boy that loved to wade  
In the clear waters of the Coe,

Ere blood had stained their amber flow—  
 On them, ere half their way was made,  
 The night came down, and they were laid,  
 Some on the scaurs of the jagged Bens,  
 Some in black bogs and stony glens,  
 Faint and worn, till kindly Death  
 Numbed their limbs, and froze their breath,

And wound them in the snow.

And there they lay with none to know,  
 And none with pious kind concern  
 To honour with a cross or cairn

The remnant of Glencoe.

And on the hills a curse doth lie

That will not die with years ;

And oft-times 'neath a scowling sky,  
 Through the black rent, where the torrent grim  
 Leaps 'neath the huge crag's frowning rim,  
 The wind comes down with a moan and a sigh ;  
 And a voice, like the voice of a wail and a cry,

The lonely traveller hears,

A voice, like the voice of Albyn weeping  
 For the sorrow and the shame  
 That stained the British soldier's name,

When kingship was in butchers' keeping,  
And power was honour's foe ;  
Weeping for scutcheons rudely torn,  
And worth disowned and glory shorn,  
And for the valiant-hearted men  
That once were mighty in the glen  
Of lonely bleak Glencoe.

## SONNETS.

### I.

#### KING'S HOUSE INN.

FAIR are the trees whose random tresses fling  
Rich grace on the green steeps of Ballachulish;  
But King's House Inn, though you may deem it  
foolish,  
And its bleak moor, my wilful Muse will sing.  
For why? I love the torrent's savage din,  
The giant-trailing mist, the snorting Ben,  
The wind-swept heath, the long, deer-sheltering  
glen,  
The still black tarn, and far-up-thundering linn.  
And here erect with majesty severe  
The Buchail More upshoots his Titan cone;  
I stand and look and gaze on Him alone,  
As if no other mighty Ben were near,  
And hear the pewits cry, and the wind blow  
Notes of shrill wail up from the steep Glencoe!



II.

MOONLIGHT AT KING'S HOUSE.

O FOR the touch that smote the psalmist's lyre,  
When the great beauty of the world he saw,  
And sang His praise, instinct with holy awe,  
Who rides the whirlwind, and who reins the fire !  
But not alone proud Lebanon's fulgent face  
Hath power the eye of tranced seer to draw ;  
Here, too, in Grampian land God rules by law,  
Which clothes the awfulest forms in loveliest grace.  
The placid moon, the huge sky-cleaving Ben,  
The moor loch glancing in the argent ray,  
The long white mist low-trailing up the glen,  
The hum of mighty waters far away,  
All make me wish that worthy words would come ;  
But all I find is—worship, and be dumb !

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III.

TO

AN OLD LEAFLESS TREE ON THE MOOR,


NEAR KING'S HOUSE.

POOR wreck of the old forest, gaunt and grim,  
No leafy fan, no soft green shade is thine,  
But thou hast charms will stir a rhymers' whim  
To deck thy ruin with a random line.  
Where be thy brothers? I have seen them show  
Their prostrate roots beneath long-centuried peat  
Mile after mile, where nothing now will grow  
Verdant, for eye to love or mouth to eat.  
But thou alone dost stand, like some old creed,  
Erect, to show what price it had before,  
When men believed it had a power indeed,  
To soothe each sorrow, and to cleanse each sore ;  
Or, like a statesman by the moving time  
Deserted, in his dry old strength sublime.

IV.

THE BUCHAILL ETIVE.

THOU lofty shepherd of dark Etive glen,  
Tall Titan warder of the grim Glencoe,  
I clomb thy starward peak not long ago,  
And call thee mine, and love thee much since then.  
Oft have I marvelled, if mine eye had been  
Strange witness to Creation's natal hour,  
How wondrous then had showed the flaming scene  
When out of seething depths thy cone with power  
Was shot from God. But now upon thy steep  
Fair greenness sleeps on old secure foundations,  
And on thee browse the innocent-bleating sheep  
And timorous troops of the high-antlered nations ;  
And I am here, Time's latest product, Man,  
To work thy will, O Lord, and serve thy stately plan.



## SONG OF BEN CRUACHAN.

BEN CRUACHAN is king of the mountains,  
That gird in the lovely Loch Awe,  
Loch Etive is fed from his fountains,  
By the stream of the dark-rushing Awe.  
With his peak so high,  
He cleaves the sky,  
That smiles on his old grey crown,  
While the mantle green,  
On his shoulders seen,  
In many a fold flows down.

He looks to the North, and he renders  
A greeting to Nevis Ben,  
And Nevis, in white snowy splendours,  
Gives Cruachan greeting again.  
O'er dread Glencoe  
The greeting doth go,

And where Etive winds fair in the glen ;  
And he hears the call,  
In his steep North wall,  
“ God bless thee, old Cruachan Ben ! ”

When the North winds their forces muster,  
And Ruin rides high on the storm,  
All calm, in the midst of their bluster,  
He stands, with his forehead enorm.  
When block on block,  
With thundering shock,  
Comes hurtled confusedly down,  
No whit recks He,  
But laughs to shake free  
The dust, from his old grey crown.

And while torrents on torrents are pouring  
In a tempest of truculent glee,  
When louder the loud Awe is roaring,  
And the soft lake rides like a sea ;  
He smiles through the storm,  
And his heart grows warm,  
As he thinks how his streams feed the plains ;

And the brave old Ben  
Grows young again,  
And swells with enforced veins.

For Cruachan is king of the mountains,  
That gird in the lovely Loch Awe,  
Loch Etive is fed from his fountains,  
By the stream of the dark-rushing Awe.  
Ere Adam was made,  
He reared his head  
Sublime o'er the green-winding glen ;  
And, when flame wraps the sphere,  
O'er Earth's ashes shall peer  
The peak of the old Granite Ben !

THE ASCENT OF CRUACHAN.

I.

DWELLERS in the sounding city,  
Peoplers of the peaceful glen,  
Come with me, the day is pleasant,  
I would scale the tway-coned Ben.  
Not with fly to lure the salmon,  
Where the torrent scoops the glen  
Makes me pleasure, but I dearly  
Love to climb a peakèd Ben ;  
Not with shot and mortal vollies  
To bring moorcock down, or hen,  
Is my glory, but I triumph,  
Perched upon a cloud-capt Ben.  
Come with me, the day is pleasant,  
Soon the mist may veil again

All the glory of the mountains ;  
Up, and let us scale the Ben !

## II.

See her rising proud before you,  
In the beauty of the morn,  
Queen of all the heights that grandly  
Fence the storied land of Lorn ;  
Land of Campbells and MacDougalls,  
Where full many a practised hand,  
Nerved with high heroic purpose,  
Poised the spear, and waved the brand.  
I am ready ; profits neither  
Dull delay, nor puffing haste ;  
Let your foot be lightly booted,  
Grasp your plaid about your waist ;  
Fill your pouch with lusty viands ;  
On the breezy top we dine ;  
Brim your flask with strength-inspiring  
Usquebeatha \* or fervid wine.

\* This word is a good example of how the Scottish Celts take the bones out of their words by elision of medial or final consonants. *Beatha* is just the Latin *vita* ; and *usque*, as is well known, is *aqua* ; but the last element of the compound is pronounced as if written *pai*.



Cross we first the regal-rolling,  
Swift, dark-rushing mountain flood,  
Sweeping the broad base of Cruachan,  
In his untamed lustihood ; \*  
Brush we o'er the tufted heather,  
Light with nimble unconcern,  
Plunge we through the plummy forests  
Of the broad and branching fern !  
Leap the brook that bounces lightly,  
Scale the scaur that gleams so red,  
Grasp the rowan tree whose berries  
Shine like rubies overhead ;  
Creep beneath the hoary-frosted  
Crag, where crusted lichens spread,  
By the dark pool where the troutling  
Glances from his stony bed.  
But not rashly ; hear my counsel ;  
Though ye be right valiant men,  
None can storm by rude assaulting  
Such a huge, sheer-sided Ben.

\* The river Awe, famous for salmon. In the autumn, when I climbed the Ben, John Bright, the famous reformer, was living in the neighbour-inn of Taynult, lashing the flood with the salmon-rod, and teaching his brain to repose with a wise vacuity.

Look about, above, around you,  
Map the mountain in your mind,  
And with cunning engineering  
Surely rise and wisely wind ;  
As a gunner near and nearer,  
With a cool courageous breath,  
Round some proud, broad-bastioned fortress,  
Draws the circling lines of death.

## III.

Ha ! look there where right above us  
Peers the grey and blasted cone,  
Like a jag of high Olympus,  
'Neath the dark-browed Thunderer's throne !  
Onward through the grim disorder  
Of each grey embedded stone,  
Ruin, which a thousand winters,  
Shivered from the splintered cone !  
Here's for tender shins no mercy ;  
If you stumble, there you lie ;  
Like a goat be tough and springy,  
Like a fox be sure and sly ;  
Have no flaunting tags about you ;

By this snouted crag will blow  
Oft a sudden whiff will fling you  
Like a whirling straw below.  
Now, by Heaven ! it looks full surly ;  
From the East the white mists sally,  
Sweeping far from lofty Lomond,  
Drifting up from fair Dalmally.  
Thick and thicker, swift and swifter,  
On the blinding rack is borne,  
Like a race of Furies driving  
Madly with their mantles torn.  
Softly, softly ! fear no peril  
Where we creep from block to block,  
Any stiffest blast can only  
Nail us stiffer to the rock.  
Foot it firmly, o'er the jointed  
Frost-split slabs that mark the line  
Through the mist, along the edges  
Of the black Ben's jaggy spine.  
If you turn from this brave venture,  
Now you have the broad-browed Ben  
By the forelock, I will never  
Call you bearded man again !

## IV.

Now we've done it ! here I'm seated,  
With light-hearted unconcern,  
Sheltered from the rude South-Easter  
By the huge Ben's topmost cairn.  
Here's my hand ! spring up beside me,  
Though the way be black and rough,  
Take a lesson from your shaggy  
Friend, the valiant-hearted Muff.  
All along the ledge he followed,  
Close with frequent pant and puff,  
Running, leaping, scraping, tumbling,  
Made of genuine Highland stuff.  
Ha ! thank heaven ! the mist is clearing,  
Lo ! beneath the curtained cloud,  
Gleams in glory of the sunshine  
Emerald field, and silver flood !  
Northward, at your feet dark Etive  
Mildly shines with lucid sheen,  
Land of Macintyres behind you  
Glistens vivid with the green.  
Through the giant gap where downward  
Sheer the maddened torrent pours,

1

In the weeks of wintry horror,  
When the tempest raves and roars.  
Southward, like a belt of silver,  
Flooded from a thousand rills,  
Stretches far Loch Awe the lovely,  
Through a land of dark-brown hills.  
Eastward, lo ! the lofty Lomond  
And Balquidder's purple braes,  
Land of stout strong-armed MacGregors,  
Strangely loom through saffron haze ;  
Look ! O look, that burst of splendour  
In the West, that blaze of gold  
Tells where round Mull's terraced headlands,  
Broad the breasted waves are rolled  
At thy base, thou huge-aspiring,  
Triple-crested proud Ben More,  
Known to Staffa's rock-ribbed temple,  
To Iona's hallowed shore.  
Speak not here of painted pictures,  
Which the hand of man may limn ;  
All their grandest lines are dwarfish,  
All their brightest hues are dim.  
Thou alone hast living pictures

Mighty Mind that moves the whole,  
Pulsing through the vasty splendour  
With thine all-informing soul.

## V.

Hear me now, stout-footed comrades ;  
In the scaling of the Ben  
We have done our tasking bravely,  
With the thews of Scottish men.  
We have gazed and we have wondered,  
We have mapped the pictured scene ;  
But we cannot feed on wonder  
Where the air is sharp and keen.  
Ope your stores, unlock your wallet,  
Pour the strength-inspiring wine ;  
With the granite slab for table,  
On the summit here we dine.  
If there be who rashly pledged him  
To abstain from usquebeatha,  
I do grant a free indulgence,  
From his chilly vow to day.  
Nectar drink in fields Elysian,  
But where biting airs have sway,

He alone with proof is mailèd,  
Who is lined with usquebeatha.  
Bravely started ! crown your glasses  
Now with the untainted flood,  
Of this glorious old Oporto, -  
That makes rich the British blood !  
Fill a bumper to Breadalbane,  
And the men that hunt the deer ;  
Let the wise Argyll be honoured,  
Mild of heart, of thought severe !  
Let his gallant son be toasted,  
Lorn, whose lofty love broke down  
Walls of ancient harsh partition,  
'Twixt the people and the crown ;  
Let the billow of your pæans  
To Dunolly's tower be borne :  
Praise the good and gentle lady,  
Praise the deedful maid of Lorn !  
Praise the land of mist and mountain,  
Grassy glen, and purple brae,  
Crystal well, and foamy fountain,  
Ruddy pine, and birchen spray.  
Praise all men who foot it bravely

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Up the bright and breezy way,  
Where Titanic Nature broadens  
Out in beautiful display.  
Now 'tis finished : look how darkly  
Mount the rolling mists again ;  
Here to bide would bribe the ague,  
We must turn and gain the glen.  
Then fare-thee-well, thou tway-coned Cruachan ;  
'Mid the busy haunts of men  
Thou shalt live a joy for ever  
In our hearts, thou queenly Ben !



## SONNETS.

### I.

#### ON THE MONUMENT TO NELSON AT TAYNUILT.

STRANGER, if thou hast wondering seen the grey  
Huge-planted stones on Sarum's breezy downs,  
Where once the Druid reigned with awful sway  
Above the might of croziers and of crowns,  
See here their antitype—a crude block raised  
By sweatful smelters on this wooded strand  
To him, whose valour, like a meteor, blazed  
O'er the wide ocean. With more curious hand  
Sculptor and mason oft did league their skill  
To memorize his name ; but this rude stone,  
Perched in his unhewn ruggedness alone,  
Stands, a stout witness of heroic will,  
In face of thee, fair Cruachan, and all  
Thy subject Bens, and Heaven's blue vaulted hall.

II.

BEN CRUACHAN IN A DARK EVENING.

As a fair mountain when the day hath run

His course, and scanty stars are faintly seen,  
Swathes him in folds of sombre mantle dun,

Shorn of the purple glories and the green ;  
So a fair lady—saddest of sad sights—

Who yields her humour to a peevish whim,  
Casts out the radiant Phœbus, and for him  
Brings in a devil, who blows out all the lights.

O, if ye knew, all dames with lovely faces,  
How much ye mar your beauty with your spleen,  
You'd covet more than finest silks and laces

The spirit-power that paints the fleshly screen !  
Manners are masks ; but keep the fountain bright,  
And thy whole body shall be full of light.

III.

JOHN BRIGHT AT TAYNUILT.

(1).

SAYST thou ?—and he was truly seated here

That stout broad-breasted, firmly-planted man,  
Who with brave heart, blithe look, and jovial cheer,  
To victory led the democratic clan.

There are who deem there is no truth in history,

Lies count by hundredweights, and truth by grains ;  
But I'll speak plainly out and say, the mystery

Lies only in their lack of sense and brains ;  
This fact I know, by one strong word, REFORM,  
Bright hotly stirred the people's fretful mind,  
Till Whig and Tory grew with envy warm,

And spurred with him, not to be left behind ;  
Some served their party bravely, some betrayed,  
And all danced well as this proud piper played.

IV.

JOHN BRIGHT AT TAYNUILT.

(II).

WHAT ? lodged he here and sat in that same chair,

The thunder-tongued, high-purposed democrat ;

He was an honest man, I'll stand for that—

And where he sate I'll sit well seated there.

No doubt his hand a seething broth did brew,

Perhaps too strong for old John Bull's digestion,

But 'twas a needful purge beyond all question

He deemed, life's crazy framework to renew.

If he was wrong, and history tells no tales,

Then who was right, if false then who was true,

When Whig and Tory spread their rival sails

To catch sweet favour from the gale he blew ?

All sinned : but they transgressed all honest rules

Who knocked the workman down, then made bread

with his tools.

## OBAN.

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### HUMOURS OF HIGHLAND WEATHER.

WHITHER, O whither hath fled  
The lightsome and lovely display  
Of Beauty, but yesterday shed  
On the crag, and the Ben, and the bay?  
Up from the West came a cloud,  
Small, but to greatness it grew,  
Till it wove from its tissue a shroud  
That curtains the breadth of the blue.

I look and I see in the far  
Banners of darkness unfurl'd,  
Volumes of dimness that mar  
The smile on the face of the world :

Gone into blankness hath fled

The emerald stretch of the glen,  
And the rosy gleam on the head  
Of the broad purpureal Ben.

Such are the humours that blot

The sky with the change of the year ;  
Would'st thou be mortal, and not  
Temper thy bliss with a tear ?  
Would'st thou have day without night ?  
Ponder a moment, and own  
That shadow must come with the light,  
And day by the darkness be known.

Wisely the Mighty one blends

Gloom with the glory of things,  
Grieving with gladness he sends  
Wisely to beggars and kings.  
Wisely he liveth who links  
His life as a part to the whole,  
Wisely he thinketh who thinks  
Humbly, with hymns in his soul.

A SEPTEMBER BLAST IN OBAN.

By Heaven ! the house is rocking like a ship ;  
The strong trees bend like osiers, and the sea  
Flings long white scourges forth, with truculent  
glee,  
And rides with maddened speed high-armed, to whip  
The quaking land ! O what an altered theme  
From yesterday, when in the breezeless glen  
The sear leaf dropt, and high on Cruachan Ben  
The white cloud rested like a saintly dream.  
Such are thy changes, universal Lord,  
Fearful to feeble man ! but thou art strong,  
And Nature still rings forth a jubilant song,  
Where thy sure hand doth sweep the varied chord.  
Our house may reel ; but, as no storm had been,  
The big round globe rolls through the blue Serene.

## THE LAST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER IN OBAN.

DEAR love, what change in the fair face of things

Since first this peaceful green retreat we knew,

When every sun shone through a lovelier blue,

And every zephyr flapped more fragrant wings !

And thou didst sit upon the turfy bank

While thy green parrot wandered round thy neck,

Drinking in beauty, where the day-god sank

In golden soft repose without a speck.

But now the rainful blast comes whistling by,

The black-maned clouds, like Furies on the wing

Skir past ; the sea growls up with bristling looks.

What remedy ?—thank heaven the cure is nigh,

Heap up the logs, and trim the lamp, and bring

Our winter-friends, our long-neglected books.



## INVERNESS-SHIRE.

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### THE LAY OF THE BRAVE CAMERON.

At Quatre Bras, when the fight ran high,  
Stout Cameron stood with wakeful eye,  
Eager to leap, as a mettlesome hound,  
Into the fray with a plunge and a bound.  
But Wellington, lord of the cool command,  
Held the reins with a steady hand,  
Saying, "Cameron, wait, you'll soon have enough,  
Giving the Frenchman a taste of your stuff,  
When the Cameron men are wanted."

Now hotter and hotter the battle grew,  
With tramp, and rattle, and wild halloo,  
And the Frenchmen poured, like a fiery flood,  
Right on the ditch where Cameron stood.  
Then Wellington flashed from his steadfast stance  
On his captain brave a lightning glance,


Saying, "Cameron, now have at them, boy,  
Take care of the road to Charleroi,  
Where the Cameron men are wanted!"

Brave Cameron shot like a shaft from a bow,  
Into the midst of the plunging foe,  
And with him the lads whom he loved, like a torrent  
Sweeping the rocks in its foamy current ;  
And he fell the first in the fervid fray,  
Where a deathful shot had shove its way,  
But his men pushed on where the work was rough,  
Giving the Frenchman a taste of their stuff,  
Where the Cameron men were wanted.

Brave Cameron then, from the battle's roar,  
His foster-brother stoutly bore,  
His foster-brother with service true,  
Back to the village of Waterloo.  
And they laid him on the soft green sod,  
And he breathed his spirit there to God,  
But not till he heard the loud hurrah  
Of victory billowed from Quatre Bras,  
Where the Cameron men were wanted.

By the road to Ghent they buried him then,  
This noble chief of the Cameron men,  
And not an eye was tearless seen  
That day beside the alley green :  
Wellington wept, the iron man ;  
And from every eye in the Cameron clan  
The big round drop in bitterness fell,  
As with the pipes he loved so well  
His funeral wail they chanted.

And now he sleeps (for they bore him home,  
When the war was done, across the foam)  
Beneath the shadow of Nevis Ben,  
With his sires, the pride of the Cameron men.  
Three thousand Highlandmen stood round,  
As they laid him to rest in his native ground,  
The Cameron brave, whose eye never quailed,  
Whose heart never sank, and whose hand never failed,  
Where a Cameron man was wanted.



### FASSFEARN.

STOUT old Simplicity, here I wisely greet  
Thy grandeur, and on Cameron's cradle look  
Well pleased, heart's brother of the iron duke,  
From whom the fulminant Frenchman knew defeat.  
No pillared halls were there, no gay saloons,  
But a plain low white house that scorned display,  
Where thou wert reared as Romans were, when they  
Rose from the plough to whip the Volscian loons.  
O rare old times in simple manhood schooled,  
From which our vauntful age hath vainly swerved,  
When they who ruled, like faithful fathers ruled,  
And they who served, as trustful children served !  
Hence mighty captains grew, and men who bled  
As heroes bleed, where dauntless Cameron led.

## GLENFINNAN.

WHEN Charlie lifted the standard  
At Loch Shiel low in the glen,  
His heart was lifted within him,  
As he looked on the Nevis Ben.

And looked on the clans around him,  
The Cameron men in their pride ;  
The men of Moidart and Knoydart,  
And the brave Lochiel at his side.

And his blood rose proudly within him,  
And he thought as he stood in the glen,  
Ben Nevis is monarch of mountains,  
And Charlie is monarch of men !

But many a son of the mountain,  
Whose face at noon was bright,  
Felt the heart within him sinking,  
As he lay in his plaid that night,

While the wind through the rifts of the valley,  
Came piping so shrill and so clear,  
And athwart the heart of the brave man,  
Swept the black shadow of fear.

And a voice was heard in the wind without,  
And within in the heart of the wise,  
And to the best friends of Charlie,  
With bodeful pity it cries.

O Charlie, fair was the seeming,  
And rare was the kilted show,  
But Charlie, from daring and dreaming  
No blossom to berries will grow!

THE MONUMENT  
OF  
PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD, AT GLENFINNAN,  
LOCH SHIEL.

MISFORTUNED youth, if daring gave a claim,  
And splendid hazard to a hero's glory,  
Then history knew than thine no nobler story,  
In the bright rolls of Greek and Roman fame.  
For thou wert bold, and what thy fancy bred,  
Of flattering fond conceit thy heart believed ;  
And they who followed where thy bright dream led,  
Dashed into hopeless strife, and were deceived.  
For thou lacked wisdom, and thy speed outran  
Thy strength ; strong trees take longest time to grow ;  
Wishes have wings ; but in the state of man,  
Deeds creep behind with limping pace and slow.  
Thrice-hapless prince, for thy bold brilliant whim,  
Thy friends must pay in woes that overbrim.

### KINLOCH LEVEN.

As when a student toiling with annoy,  
Through long dry tomes that tomb the dusty past,  
Lights on some gleam of nobleness at last,  
He brightens, and his heart leaps up for joy ;  
So glad was I when from the cheerless hue  
Of broad bleak moor, black loch, and swampy fen,  
Deep from the rich warm bosom of the glen,  
The green Kinloch stepped brightly into view.  
Happy the chief who in such still retreat,  
Nurses the memory of long-centuried sires,  
Whose faithful people go with forward feet  
Where his eye flashes, and his voice inspires,  
Who makes the hills his home, and reigns a king  
O'er willing hearts who love his sheltering wing.



## KINLOCH MOIDART.

### I.

AND this is Moidart ! in this extreme nook  
The Stuart landed, and the Pope has friends,  
And the old Faith that swears by church and book,  
Stands stiffly here, and neither breaks nor bends ;  
Like some hoar father of a scattered race,  
Vagrants of East and West, a homeless crew,  
He only holds the old familiar place,  
And the men know him now who always knew.  
Not wise is he who vents an angry breath,  
'Gainst souls that hang by Europe's hoary creed,  
And, for his legs are sound, deals wanton scath  
On the old crutch that helps the limper's speed ;  
We all must cling to something in our need,  
Else helpless tossed through darkness into death.

## KINLOCH MOIDART.

### II.

“ PAPISTS—the Devil ! ”    Nay, good friend, be quiet,

    I live to love all things, whose name is MAN ;  
The west wind here may bravely rage and riot,  
    But spare me curses 'gainst the human clan.

Papists I've known the foremost in the van  
    Of God's most elect host of golden worth,  
And you, poor shell-fish, squirt your spiteful ban  
    Against the men most like to Christ on earth !

Go to your Bible, Protestant, and learn  
    On prayerful knees, the one thing needful there ;  
This found, 'tis matter of most light concern,  
    What name you go by, or what dress you wear ;  
Fan in your breast the sacred fire that warms,  
And waste no breath in wrangling about forms.

## DUMBARTONSHIRE.



### EDENDARACH.

#### A LAY OF LOCH LOMOND.

YE gentle folks that peak and pine,  
And bend your back with sickly crook  
O'er counted cash or inky line,  
In the grey city's dingy nook,  
I pray you shake the dust away  
From your brown coat some breezy day,  
And, when you hear the whistle shrill  
Of railway car behind the hill,  
Be wise, and jump into the train,  
And rattle on with hissing strain,  
To see how well we spend our time  
In face of Lomond Ben sublime,  
At leafy Edendarach.

A simple horizontal line.

At Edendarach, on the shore,  
Nor rattling cab, nor dusty street,  
Nor eager crowds with rival roar,  
Disturb our quiet, green retreat,  
Where on the grassy slope we sit,  
And see the light-winged shadows flit  
From heather brae to heather brae,  
And listen through the sunny day  
To the sweet birds that hymn their love  
From blooming bush or greenening grove ;  
While we, with hearts as blithe as they,  
Sing carols to the lusty May,  
At leafy Edendarach.

And when we're stirred by livelier mood  
And love of high adventure, then  
We steam it o'er the glancing flood  
To the high-fronted broad-viewed Ben.  
From Rowardennan we make start,  
And scale the height with cunning art  
A-foot, or, if our strength be scanty,  
Astride on some stout Rosinante ;  
From crag to crag we wend along,

With shout, and lash, and lusty song,  
Far up amid the breezy blue,  
But never wandering from the view  
Of leafy Edendarach.

Now by the neck we seize the Ben,  
And now we stand upon his crown,  
And look victorious on the glen,  
With dark-blue flood far-stretching down,  
And view with wondering strange emotion  
Bens upon bens, a tumbled ocean,  
With peak, and scaur, and jagged crest,  
And braes in fresh green glory drest,  
And wooded isle, and gleaming bay,  
And smoking cities far away,  
And what defies all tongue to tell,  
But in dear memory loves to dwell,  
At leafy Edendarach.

Or, if a lower game shall please,  
Deftly we seize the limber oar,  
And, from its cove of sheltering trees,  
Wing our light wherry from the shore.

Swift as an arrow from the bow,  
We cut the bright loch's wavy flow ;  
Swift as a gull the billow skims,  
Our Highland laddies stretch their limbs ;  
With laughing eye and glowing face,  
Our lasses urge the liquid race ;  
While Tarbet greets with loud halloo  
The livery of the red and blue,  
The pride of Edendarach !

From isle to isle we leap the wave,  
As swift as shot from touch of trigger,  
Until we come beneath the cave  
Of ruddy Rob, the stout Macgregor :  
Then, like a goat that loves a crag,  
We scramble up from jag to jag ;  
On many a gnarled and tangled root  
We clench the hand and fix the foot,  
And cautious creep, with many a shift,  
Beneath a yawning granite rift,  
And, wondering, see the rock-roofed den  
Which lodged that friend of honest men,  
Not far from Edendarach.

Then through the tangled copsy maze,  
We forage bravely all and each,  
And from the wood's dry ruin raise  
A crackling fire upon the beach.  
Uprolls the smoke with curling pride,  
The kettle boils with bubbling tide,  
And from the spout all full and free,  
Flow fragrant streams of dark-brown tea ;  
Then with strong wine and loud acclaim,  
We toast the brave Macgregor's name ;  
Our honoured lady, too, and lord,  
Who richly spread the friendly board  
For us at Edendarach !

And thus from lightsome day to day,  
Gaily we spend the winged time  
In play, or work that's kin to play,  
Beneath Ben Lomond's brow sublime.  
And you—if ye are wise to think  
How toil with leisure loves to link  
Her various chain, and fear to grind  
At the tread-mill which murders mind—  
Break from your tethered task, and take

A taste of Lomond's breezy lake,  
For three bright sunny weeks with me,  
Amid the greenwood rambling free,  
At leafy Edendarach !



## ROB ROY'S CAVE.

HERE lodged Rob Roy ; proud kings have palaces,

And foxes holes, and sheep the sheltering fold ;

Fish own the pools, and birds the plummy trees ;

And stout Rob Roy possessed this granite hold.

Call him not thief and robber : he was born

A hero more than most that wear a star,

And brooked his brawny strength with manly scorn

On fraud and force and falsehood to make war.

In these well-trimmed and well-oiled times a man


Moves part of a machine : but then strong will

Shaped each hard-sinewed life to kingly plan,

And ruled by right of might and law of skill.

When kings were weak, lords false, and lawyers knaves,

Rob Roy saved honest men from being slaves.



ARDLUI:  
THE PULPIT ROCK.

I.


IN sooth a goodly temple, walled behind  
With crag precipitous of granite grey,  
And by green birches corniced, which the wind  
Sowed o'er the rim in random rich display,  
And for a roof the azure-curtained hall,  
Light-floating cloud, and broad benignant ray,  
And organed by the hum of waterfall,  
And splash of bright waves in the gleaming bay.  
And here's the pulpit, this huge granite mass  
Erect, frost-sundered from the mossy crown,  
And there the people sit on turfy grass,  
And here the fervid preacher thunders down ;  
Go kneel beneath Saint Paul's proud dome, and say  
If God be nearer there, or here to day !

ARDLUI:  
THE PULPIT ROCK.

II.

HUGE Bens, green glens, hoar waterfalls, blue skies  
    Belaud who will ; there's something nobler here,  
A thing that being seen with thoughtful eyes  
    Types Scotland's strength in lines more sharp and  
        clear.

Let others poise the pictured dome, and pour  
    Through long-drawn aisles the curious-chanted prayer,  
With various beauty pave the figured floor,  
    And with rich clouds of perfume load the air ;  
But, Scotland, thou, when meddling priests would bind  
    Thine unbought lips in courtly form to pray,  
Thy temple in the open moor did'st find,  
    Thy pulpit in the granite boulder grey ;  
Accept the sign, and point with sturdy pride  
To thy York Minster on Loch Lomond's side !



## ROSS-SHIRE.



### A PSALM OF LOCH DUICH.

ALL Nature rests : and, save the hidden hum  
Of the clear torrent in the grey ravine  
Scooping its hollow way, or the low plash  
Of peaceful oars across the lucid lake  
Bearing their pious freight to morning church,  
No sound is heard. No ripple on the face  
Of the quaint-winding, mountain-girdled flood  
Disturbs the fair composure of the scene :  
No vagrant curl of light slow-wandering cloud  
Dapples the blue serene ; the mellow slopes  
Glow with the russet fern ; and up the glen  
The green-clad cones and piny-tufted crags  
In random grandeur cast, with sharp lines cleave  
The softness of the rich autumnal air.  
Hark ! from the base of that green copsy knoll

The gentle call of the familiar bell  
Invites the plaided worshippers to join  
The sabbath service solemn and severe  
Of Presbyterian piety. Go thou  
And worship with them, if so be thy heart  
Spontaneous rising to the source of Good  
Chime with their hymns, and thy well tutored lips  
Spell the dread mysteries of their iron creed  
With awful pleasure. But if far from these  
Thy spirit dwells, then let thy song ascend  
Apart, with mine upon the lonely hills :  
God numbers not the heads, but weighs the hearts  
Of them that worship. Here nor preacher needs  
With gusts of studied passion to upstir  
The dull heart's stagnant pool, nor with set styles  
To train thy finite mind with blind embrace  
To clutch the Infinite ; all the vasty world  
Sublime, the living temple of his power  
Invades thy sense, and occupies thy thought.  
There have been fools—no void and vacant souls—  
But super-subtle self-confounding wits,  
Eager to doubt and studious to deny,  
Who in the mighty marvel of his works

Owne not the workman ; let such pass ; but thou  
With open eye and reverent-clinging heart  
Worship, and with pure homage of consent  
Accept his doings. What He is he shews,  
And what he shews interpreted becomes  
Thy law, and thy religion ; thou art bound  
By Him as by the chain that bindeth all.  
This the unkempt, untutored savage knew  
Ere temples rose, or bell did toll to church,  
Or stood the mitred priest with hands upreared  
Leading the suppliant pomp, or swelled the chaunt  
Of the responsive, rich, clear-throated hymn  
From lips of white-stoled boys, and maidens chaste,  
To sacred service trained. This with his quick  
Fair-shaping fancy the old Greek declared,  
When every star that gems the lucent blue,  
And every ray that paints the dædal globe,  
And every wave that crests the heaving brine,  
And the streams bickering from a thousand glens,  
And every shadow travelling o'er the hills,  
Leapt into Godhead's perfect mould, to feed  
His eager lust for worship. This in his watch  
Star-canopied the Hebrew shepherd knew

With holier instinct and profounder ken;  
This the wild hunter in his hairy tent  
Lethargic stretched, or with tempestuous foot  
Chasing the ostrich. This the holy seer  
Saw lonely-brooding upon Judah's hills,  
And nursed the sacred thought within his breast,  
Till into manhood panoplied it grew,  
And spurned his bosom's narrow bound, and strode  
Majestic o'er the world, and captive led  
The tribes of men, and awed the hearts of kings.  
Thus God in every age, and every clime,  
Of his unbounded excellence some part  
Or aspect, as their faculty might reach,  
Dimly revealed, in various feature typed,  
To the uncouthed children of his love.  
And we, who in these latest ages reap  
The fullness of the teaching of all times,  
Perched on high platforms of far-circling range,  
And forcing earth and sky to yield their necks  
Obedient to our yoke of lordly thought,  
Shall we, with all our knowing craft, know less  
Than the embruted bushman of the source  
Whence knowledge comes, and all things knowable,

And rather claim low brotherhood with beasts  
That with prone faces crop the foodful ground  
Thinking no God ?—No fellowship with you  
True wisdom claims, ye who with fingering ken  
Note the bare outward fact, senseless to feel  
The soul that moulds the fact, and makes it be  
A speechful sign of God, whose thoughts are worlds,  
And in whose life all birth and death, and all  
The steps of swift mutation, are but stops  
In one harmonious all-involving hymn  
Of wonder-working energy divine,  
Instinct with reason. Not I, with twinkling lamps  
Of science groping in disgodded dens  
Of cold unreasoned matter love to pry,  
Culling the broken shells, and husks of things  
Inert and lifeless, but do gladly stray  
On the bright surface and familiar face  
Of the broad living world, where every beam  
From the great centre of all-nurturing light  
Shot earthwards, bears upon its procreant wing  
Miraculous virtue, at whose touch Earth's slime  
Welters with every reasonable form  
Of heaving life, and from the conscious ground



Upsprings the flower in every dainty type  
Of measured beauty rare, and undulant woods  
With leafy large embroidery outspread,  
Work of that sleepless surge of shaping soul  
That makes the world a world, and fills the eye  
With wonder and delight.—But I will cease,  
Lest my fond babblement disturb the calm  
And beauty of this place ; and evermore,  
When Sabbath bells in dingy city toll,  
Through smoke, and dusty tramp, and rattling wheels,  
And multitudinous roar of crowded life,  
I will bethink me of thy pool serene,  
Loch Duich, with fair fringe of friendly green,  
And gleaming cots, and the low splash far-heard  
Of peaceful Sabbath oars, and the quaint grace  
Of tufted crag, and vagrant-climbing birch,  
And lone Glenshiel, with strong rock-scooping flood  
Fenced by green cones, and granite peaks sublime.

TAIN :

THE CHAPEL OF SAINT DUTHACH.

I sate in the old church yard  
Beside the chapel grey,  
Where holy Duthach was born and bred,  
On a knoll of the sandy bay.

I sate on the old grey stones  
Where the homes of the dead men be,  
And a grey mist curtained the rayless sky,  
And a grey mist girdled the sea.

I sate, and I looked on the old grey town  
That looks on the old grey sea,  
And thoughts and shapes of the old grey time  
Came down, like a dream, on me.

And I saw the shrine of the holy man,  
And candles burning bright

Around the chest where his body lay,  
By day, and eke by night.

And crowds of low-bent worshippers  
Around the sacred rail,  
Hard, weathered men, and blooming youths,  
And maids with decent veil,

And knights of iron grasp I saw,  
With stout achievement crowned,  
Bowing their heads, like drooping flowers,  
Upon the hallowed ground :

And mitred priests, and shaven monks  
Belted with hempen rope,  
And legates, and proud cardinals  
Who served the purple Pope :

And burghers too, in burly state,  
With chain and mace were there,  
And many a tattered pilgrim loon  
Uncouth with matted hair :

And kings, who from palatial halls  
A barefoot journey came,  
Through Duthach's potent grace to shrive  
Their souls from guilty blame.

And one I saw—a Caithness man,  
Who ran with dusty feet,  
In Duthach's holy shrine to claim  
The unprofaned retreat,

From chase of the red-handed men,  
McNeills, a lawless crew,  
Who spurned the ban of the holy girth,  
And harried, and plundered, and slew,

And flung their brands on holy roof,  
And feared nor priest nor king,  
And earned with blood the robbers' wage  
On gallows-tree to swing.

And I saw :—but while I sate and mused,  
And gazed with shaping eye,

The steam-car looming through the fog  
Came sharply hissing by.

I hugged my plaid, I grasped my staff,  
The air-spun show was fled,  
And through the Fen to Bonar brig,  
With snorting speed I sped.

## SUTHERLANDSHIRE.



### BONNIE STRATHNAVER.

(SONG.)

BONNIE STRATHNAVER ! Sutherland's pride,  
With thy stream softly-flowing, and mead spreading  
wide ;

Bonnie Strathnaver, where now are the men  
Who peopled with gladness thy green-mantled glen ?  
Bonnie Strathnaver !

Bonnie Strathnaver ! Sutherland's pride,  
Sweet is the breath of the birks on thy side ;  
But where is the blue smoke that curled from the  
glen,  
When thy lone hills were dappled with dwellings of  
men ?

Bonnie Strathnaver !

Bonnie Strathnaver ! O tearful to tell  
Are the harsh deeds once done in thy bonnie green  
dell,

When to rocks of the cold blastful ocean were driven  
The men on thy green turfy wilds who had thriven,

## Bonnie Strathnaver !

When the lusty-thewed lad, and the light-tripping  
maid,

Looked their last on the hills where their infancy  
strayed,

When the grey, drooping sire, and the old hirpling  
dame

Were chased from their hearths by the fierce-spread-  
ing flame,

**Bonnie Strathnaver !**

Bonnie Strathnaver ! Sutherland's pride,  
Wide is the ruin that's spread on thy side ;  
The bramble now climbs o'er the old ruined wall,  
And the green fern is rank in the tenantless hall,

## Bonnie Strathnaver !

Bonnie Strathnaver, Sutherland's pride,  
Loud is the baa of the sheep on thy side,  
But the pipe and the song, and the dance are no  
    more,  
And gone the brave clansmen who trod thy green  
    floor.

Bonnie Strathnaver!

Bonnie Strathnaver, Sutherland's pride,  
Vain are the tears which I weep on thy side ;  
The praise of the bard is the meed of the glen,  
But where is the charm that can bring back the men  
    To Bonnie Strathnaver ?



## CAITHNESS.



### JOHN O'GROAT'S HOUSE.

WHAT went ye out for to see ?

A rock in the midst of the wave,  
Where the north winds bluster and rave,  
Caledonia's outermost rim  
Kissing the ocean grim,  
Skerry, and holm, and stack  
Fringed with the foam and the wrack—

    This went ye out for to see ?

Not in the midst of the wave,  
Rocks where the north winds rave,  
Caledonia's outermost rim  
Kissing the billowy brim,  
Skerry, and holm, and stack  
Fringed with the foam and the wrack—

    Not this went I out for to see ;  
But the house of the famous John Groat,

In the face of the rain and the wind,  
With travel and toil I sought ;  
But seeking I failed to find,  
When to Huna I wandered alone.

What went ye out for to see ?  
Houses all hoary and grey  
Washed by the barren sea-spray ;  
Flagstones and slates in a row,  
Where hedges are frightened to grow ;  
Shrubs in the flap of the breeze,  
Sweating to make themselves trees ;

This went ye out for to see ?  
Not houses all hoary and grey  
Washed by the barren sea-spray ;  
Flagstones and slates in a row,  
Where hedges are frightened to grow ;  
Shrubs in the flap of the breeze,  
Sweating to make themselves trees ;

Not this went I out for to see ;  
But the house of the famous John Groat,  
In the face of the rain and the wind,  
With travel and toil I sought ;

But seeking I failed to find,  
When to Huna I wandered alone.

What went ye out for to see ?

In face of the billows a beach,  
The whitest that Phœbus can bleach,  
The beautiful ruin of shells,  
Where fishes once lived in their cells,  
Now soft and silvery spread,  
Like leaves from a flowery bed—

This went ye out for to see ?

Not by the billows a beach,  
The whitest that Phœbus can bleach,  
The beautiful ruin of shells,  
Where fishes once lived in their cells,  
Now soft and silvery spread,  
Like leaves from a flowery bed ;

Not this went I out for to see ;  
But the house of the famous John Groat,  
In the face of the wet and the wind,  
With travel and toil I sought,  
But seeking I failed to find,  
When to Huna I wandered alone.

What went ye out for to see ?

A dance of seabirds on the wing,  
Where like down on the zephyr they swing ;  
The gull with his grey plume spread,  
The gullimot dipping his head,  
The puffin with snow-white breast,  
The long-necked cormorant's crest—

This went ye out for to see ?

Not dance of seabirds on the wing,  
Where like down on the zephyr they swing ;  
The gull with his grey plume spread,  
The gullimot dipping his head,  
The puffin with snow-white breast,  
The long-necked cormorant's crest ;

Not this went I out for to see ;

But the house of the famous John Groat,  
In the face of the rain and the wind,  
With travel and toil I sought ;

But seeking I failed to find,

When to Huna I wandered alone.

What went ye out for to see ?

Long ledges of sandy rock

With hammer of science to knock,  
And redeem into blaze of the light  
Strange fishes imprisoned in night,  
Millions of billions of ages  
Ere Moses indited his pages ;

    This went ye out for to see ?

Not long ledges of rock  
With hammer of science to knock,  
And redeem into blaze of the light  
Strange fishes imprisoned in night,  
Millions of billions of ages  
Ere Moses indited his pages ;

    Not this went I out for to see ?

But the house of the famous John Groat,  
In the face of the rain and the wind,  
With travel and toil I sought ;  
But seeking I failed to find,  
    When to Huna I wandered alone.

What went ye out for to see ?

    The rush and the whirl of the tides,  
    Where the fretted Atlantic rides,  
    Like a steed with snow-white mane

Beating the sounding plain,  
Where the ship with tight-drawn sail  
Strains to the stress of the gale—

    This went ye out for to see ?  
Not the rush and the whirl of the tides  
Where the fretted Atlantic rides  
Like a steed with snow-white mane,  
Beating the sounding plain,  
Where the ship with tight-drawn sail  
Strains to the stress of the gale ;

    Not this went I out for to see ;  
But the house of the famous John Groat,  
In the face of the rain and the wind,  
With travel and toil I sought ;  
But seeking I failed to find,

    When to Huna I wandered alone.

What went ye out for to see ?

    The hull of a mastless bark,  
Like the shadow of death in the dark,  
Drifting, drifting away,  
'Neath the tempest's brazen bray,  
Tossed on the horn of the wave,

And gulphed in a bubbling grave—

    This went ye out for to see ?

Not the hull of a mastless bark,

Like the shadow of death in the dark,

Drifting, drifting away,

'Neath the tempest's brazen bray,

Tossed on the horn of the wave,

And gulphed in a bubbling grave ;

    Not this went I out for to see ;

But the house of the famous John Groat,

In the face of the rain and the wind,

With travel and toil I sought ;

But seeking I failed to find,

    When to Huna I wandered alone.

Now the truth I speak to thee.

    Thou hast spent thy toil for nought ;

    For the house of John de Groat

    May on earth no more be found ;

    Thou must seek it underground

    With the Picts who loved to dwell

    In the grey and grimy cell.

Yes ! my toil I spent for nought,

For the house of John de Groat  
May on earth no more be found ;  
I must seek it underground  
With the Picts who loved to dwell  
In the grey and grimy cell.

Now this truth I plainly see,  
Thou hast found me fool of heart  
That I sought the house of Groat ;  
But not empty I depart,  
Having fed both eye and ear  
With what few men see and hear,  
With the lovely and the grand  
At the far end of the land,  
In green summer glory shown.  
So I praise the name of Groat ;  
Tho' I found not what I sought,  
Yet I did the thing I ought  
When to Huna I wandered alone.



WICK :

THE HERRING FISHERY.

O life, O death, O countless multitude  
Of things that are, and things that were before,  
Of things that die to build up finer food  
For things that live on their disrupted store !  
From this grey town a thousand-masted fleet,  
Helmed by strong men who tread the earth with  
pride,

‘ Rides forth in full-sailed pomp, to gather meat  
From glancing lives that fret the peopled tide.  
Thus Nature from her prostrate ruin rears  
Her vanquished head, still victor in the strife,  
And through progressive deaths in stately tiers  
Mounts to the stage which bears the noblest life,  
Where vilest loss transformed to splendid gain  
Shines glorious ; and no force is spent in vain.

## PERTHSHIRE.


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### LOCH RANNOCH.

O'ER lone Loch Rannoch's clear far-stretching flood  
With gentlest curl the Sabbath breezes creep ;  
No sound disturbs thy contemplative mood,  
Save the meek cry of the far-bleating sheep,  
And the low hum of distant waterfall.  
Here, on these voiceless banks, if thou can'st keep  
Pure Sabbath for thyself, and wisely reap  
Harvest of native thought, without the call  
Of fervid preacher, I forbid thee not ;  
God dwelleth not in temples made with hands,  
Nor chains His presence to one charmed spot.  
But they are wise who kneel in brothered bands  
At hallowed stations : where their fathers trod,  
Fools will despise the beaten way to God.

## LOCH RANNOCH MOOR.

In the lone glen the silver lake doth sleep ;  
Sleeps the white cloud upon the sheer black hill :  
All moorland sounds a solemn silence keep ;  
I only hear the tiny trickling rill  
'Neath the red moss. Athwart the dim grey pall,  
That veils the day, a dusky fowl may fly ;  
But, on this bleak brown moor, if thou shalt call  
For men, a spirit will sooner make reply.  
Come hither, thou whose agile tongue doth flit  
From theme to theme with change of wordy war,  
Converse with men makes sharp the glittering wit,  
But Wisdom whispers truth, when crowds are far.  
Come, sit thee down upon this old grey stone ;  
Men learn to think, and feel, and pray, alone.



## AT LOCH ERICHT.

### I.

No railways here !—thank Heaven at length I'm free  
From travelling Cockneys, wondering at a hill,  
From lispng dames, who from the city flee,  
To nurse feigned raptures at a tumbling rill !  
From huge hotels and grandly-garnished inns,  
With all things but true kindness in their plan,  
And from sleek waiters, whose obsequious grins  
Do make me loathe the very face of man !  
Smooth modern age, which no rough line doth mar,  
All men must praise thy very decent law !  
But in this bothie I am happier far,  
Where I must feed on oats, and sleep on straw.  
For why ?—here men look forth from honest faces,  
And are what thing they seem, without grimaces.

## AT LOCH ERICHT.

### II.

O HEAVENS ! a lovelier day ne'er shone upon  
The gleaming beauty of the long-drawn flood !  
Come hither, if Scotland boasts a loyal son,  
And nurse the holy patriotic mood !  
These crags that sink precipitous to the waves,  
These floods that gush down the sheer-breasted hill,  
They were not made to train soft fashion's slaves,  
And to nice modes to trim the pliant will.  
A strong rude heart once burned in Scottish men,  
And Scotland showed her stamp upon her sons ;  
The mountain-nursling all might surely ken ;  
But now through all one English smoothness runs ;  
Men cut their manners, as their clothes, by rule,  
But none grows strong in Nature's breezy school.

## A SONG OF BEN LEDI.

COME, sit on Ledi's old grey peak,  
And sing a song with me,  
Where the wild bird whirrs o'er the mosses bleak,  
And the wild wind whistles free !  
'Tis sweet to lie on the tufted down,  
Low low in the gowany glen ;  
But proud is the foot that stands on the crown  
Of the glorious Ledi Ben.

Come hither, ye townsmen, soot-besoiled,  
Who cower in dingy nooks,  
On whom no ray of the sun hath smiled,  
To shame your sombre looks.  
Come, closely mewed in steaming lanes,  
Whom musty chambers pen,  
And look abroad on the world of God  
From the top of this glorious Ben !

Come ye who sit with moody pains,  
And curious-peering looks,  
Clogging the veins of your laden brains  
With the dust of your maundering books.  
Not in your own dim groping souls,  
Nor in words of babbling men,  
But here His wonders God unrolls—  
On the peak of the Ledi Ben.

Look forth on these far-stretching rows  
Of huge-ridged mountains high ;  
There God his living Epos shows  
Of powers that never die.  
Far north, far west, each glowing crest  
Thy sateless view may ken,  
Where proudly they stand to rampart the land,  
With this glorious Ledi Ben.

And lo ! where eastward, far beneath,  
The broad and leafy plain  
Spreads on the banks of silvery Teith  
Stout labour's fair domain ;

The smoke from the long white-glancing town,  
The loch that gleams in the glen,  
All rush to thine eye when castled high  
On this glorious Ledi Ben.

Come, sit with me, ye sons of the free,  
Join hearty hand to hand,  
And claim your part in the iron heart  
Of the Grampian-girded land !  
Soft lands of the South on rosy beds  
May cradle smother men,  
But the Northern knows his strength when he treads  
The heath of the old grey Ben.

Come, sit with me and praise with glee,  
On the peak of this granite Ben,  
The brave old land, where the stream leaps free  
Down the rifts of the sounding glen.  
Land of strong hands and glowing hearts,  
And mother of stalwart men,  
Who nurse free thoughts where the wild breeze floats  
On the peak of the Ledi Ben.



## ABERDEENSHIRE.

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### BRAEMAR :

#### THE THREE CHURCHES.

THE clear bell o'er the moor sounds far ;  
And, through the lone sparse-peopled glen,  
Its weekly freight the Sabbath car  
Brings down of grave God-fearing men.

Three churches in the village stand ;  
This serves the State, and that is Free,  
The third doth own the Pope's command,  
And God in Heaven claims all the three.

'Tis well. Some men do sigh for unity,  
And for God's sheep one fold prepare,  
To live a faultless fair community,  
Somewhere on Earth, or in the air.

•

11

Fond fools ! in father Noah's ark,  
    (The learn'd can tell how long ago),  
Had every dog its separate bark,  
    And every face its diverse show.

Look round on sky, and sea, and plain,  
    This glowing scene of bright divinity,  
One single law, as with a chain,  
    Doth bind the various vast infinity.

From breeze-borne moth to stable-man  
    One type informs the breathing race ;  
The law, that rules God's Protean plan,  
    Is sameness with a shifting face.

All units from one centre flow,  
    And all the strangely-woven strife  
Of high and low, and swift and slow,  
    Makes music in a larger life.

As the huge branches of a tree  
    Clash, when the stormy buffets blow ;  
Hostile they seem, but one they be,  
    And by the strife that shakes them grow.

So the vast world of adverse things,  
That with a reeling fury nod,  
Battles of churches and of kings,  
Have one unshaken root in God.

Who this believes will fear no harm  
From counted articles, or beads ;  
There's room in God's wide-circling arm  
For all that swear by all the creeds.

Creeds are but school-books, kindly given  
To teach our stammering tongues to spell  
His name ; all help the good to Heaven,  
And none can save the bad from Hell.

## BEN MUICDHUI.

O'ER broad Muicdhui sweeps the keen cold blast,  
Far whirrs the snow-bred, white-winged ptarmigan,  
Sheer sink the cliffs to dark Loch Etagan,  
And all the mount with shattered rock lies waste.  
Here brew ship-foundering storms their force divine,  
Here gush the fountains of wild-flooding rivers ;  
Here the strong thunder frames the bolt that shivers  
The giant strength of the old twisted pine.  
Yet, even here, on the bare waterless brow  
Of granite ruin, I plucked a purple flower,  
A delicate flower, as fair as aught, I trow,  
That toys with zephyrs in my lady's bower.  
So Nature blends her powers ; and he is wise  
Who to his strength no gentlest grace denies.

## THE HIGHLANDER'S LAMENT.

Down Cluny's grassy glen there came an aged High-  
landman,

But firm his step, and proud his heart with memories  
of his clan.

A shrewd clear-thoughted man was he—as many such  
there be

In Scotia's land—though plain his garb, and humble  
his degree ;


And, like that wandering Greek, had travelled from  
his native glen,

And seen the cities, and known the minds of various-  
customed men ;

And now with rich experience mild, but with a heart  
that burned

With the untamed fire of youth, he to his Highland  
home returned.

Gladly he breathed the breeze that blew from lofty  
Loch-na-Gar,



And his eye roamed freely o'er the purple braes of broad  
Braemar.

Full many a thought of joyous days, that ne'er might  
be again,

Full many a mist-enshrouded form was floating through  
his brain ;

But, when he came to Coldrach bridge, where the  
forceful mountain torrent

Cuts through the pointed granite ledge with deep  
dark-swirling current,

He sate him down ; and, while his eye with streaming  
sorrow fills,

He looked upon the bright green slope, that skirts the  
adverse hills.

Full well that grassy knoll he knew ; for there, in  
summer time,

Oft had he wandered to and fro, when life was in its prime ;

And thence, with early-roaming step, when the heath  
was bright and dewy,

Oft-times had crossed the bald grey hill, to the pines  
of Ballochbuie ;

But now bleak rows of tumbled stones is all his sight  
may know,

And thus he pours the sad lament, while free the salt  
tears flow :—

“O woe is me ! my Highland home—the thought  
consumes my brain—

Here, in my native Highland glen, I seek my home  
in vain !

The Highland glen to Highland men may be a home  
no more ;

They drave them far, by ruthless law, across wide  
ocean's roar.

O heartless lords, O loveless law, with calculation  
cold,

Ye sold the mighty force, that glows in faithful hearts,  
for gold !

Ungrateful lords, with our good swords, how oft, at  
your command,

With heavy blow we smote the foe, and pledged for  
you the land !

Now in your halls ye sit at ease, and, with uncaring  
smile,

Ye sign the word, that bans the faithful peasant from  
the soil.

Who gave the broad domain to you—did man, or God  
in Heaven,—

That the stout tillers of the land, might from their  
homes be driven ?

To oust the men that held the glen, through long dark  
years of danger,

That ye might gather gold at ease, from one huge-  
acred stranger ?

Woe unto you, the grasping crew, that make your  
acres wide,

That Earth may be alone for you, with place for none  
beside !

Who from their humble cabins cast the meek indus-  
trious poor,

That ye may stalk the stags for sport, and scour with  
guns the moor !

Even at your gates the judgment waits ; there is a  
law divine

That damns your deeds. The fine will come, though  
lords and lawyers join."

The old man spake ; and wiped his brow ; and rose ;  
and sate again ;



For his limbs were weak with the whirling thoughts  
that shook his troubled brain.

But up he rose, and, with heavy step, went slowly  
pacing on,

By Callater bridge, along the road that winds to  
Castleton,

Till he came to the ridge that skirts the hill, and the  
knoll of grassy green,

And the long grey rows of tumbled stones, where  
houses once had been ;

Then sate him down, as one that loves to nurse his  
dreary mood,

And, after silence long, again his sad lament re-  
newed :—

“ O where be they, the merry crew, of lusty Highland  
men,

Then, when the stout old Farquharson possessed the  
peopled glen ?

A kindly heart, I wis, had he ; where'er his foot might  
wend,

From winding Dee to far Glenshee, the cottar called  
him friend.

From door to door his step was known ; with oaken  
staff in hand

He stood, and wove the easy talk, with the tillers of  
the land.

No harsh reproof they feared from him, no heartless  
lawyer's ban ;

He owned the soil, but rather owned the hearts of all  
the clan.

The girded quioch they brimmed for him ; for him they  
spread the board ;

The coffers of their hoarded gold they oped, to serve  
their lord.

O then, when lords who stalk the deer, and prince and  
peer, were far,

The happiest glen was Cluny then, of all the broad  
Braemar.

But now, O heavens ! I sit beneath this stunted rowan  
tree,

Where all is desolate and drear, that once was joy to  
me.

Here, in the house where I was born, the uncropped  
thistle grows,

The nettle and the tansy, 'mid the tumbled stony rows ;

•

And one big farmer holds the glen, that once did  
count a score,

And all that loved me once, and live, are far from  
Albin's shore.

Three brothers once were mine : three goodlier men  
ne'er trod the heather ;

Their strength was like the gushing streams, their  
looks like sunny weather.

One crossed the Atlantic's roar, and vowed, with  
sweatful hard endeavour,

To make Glen Cluny's name revive, beyond St. Law-  
rence river ;

But, o'er Quebec the glooming wing of pestilence was  
spread,

And he, the strongest of the strong, was numbered  
with the dead.

The second followed in his track, but found a briny  
pillow ;

Alone the blazing ship went down, into the yawning  
billow.

The third in far Australia lived, and went to dig for gold—  
The cursed gold !— at Melbourne, and washed the  
twinkling mould ;

.

But, as he slept, with the gathered ore beneath his  
pillow rolled,

A ruffian stole his noble life, and seized the gleaming  
gold.

And I am left. But where, O where is she, to me  
more dear,

That lived with me in Castleton, one happy, happy year?  
My bosom's wife, my joy, my life, so bright-faced once  
and gay,

But, when the last sad clearing came, she pined and  
died away.

Her father and her mother dear, her blooming sisters  
three,

They went for work to Forfar town, they went to far  
Dundee.

Scant work they found, and ill they thrived ; the thick  
gross-burthened air

Was poison to their mountain blood ; they drooped  
and faded there.

The father, first, and mother died ; and then the black  
disease,

That travels from the baleful East, with rapid scythe  
did seize

Two of the blooming sisters three ; the third—I dare  
not tell—

She lived ; but want had baited vice ; and to that depth  
she fell

Whence few may rise. Such stroke on stroke of over-  
topping woe

Broke my wife's heart. She died ; and sleeps the  
mountain turf below.

And now upon my native sod I'm left alone, alone,  
Even as this rowan tree that nods, above the roofless  
stone !”

The old man wept a little space ; and, while he heaved  
a sigh,

The hearth and blackened gable met his woeful-wan-  
dering eye :

The very mint, that in his father's garden thickly grew,  
That o'er the stones redundant spread, with sorrowful  
ken he knew ;

The mint that once, with careful hand, on Sabbath  
mornings bright,

His mother wont to pluck, and wrapt it in her kerchief  
white,

When to the kirk they went. This sight did sharper  
point his pain ;  
And forth, with harsh invective blent, his sorrow burst  
again :—

“ By Heaven, it is a lawless land ! we boast that we  
are free ;  
So is the wild cat ; so the hawk ; all savage things are  
free.  
The lord is free to bind the soil, the rich to crush the  
poor ;  
The poor—God knows he hath no right to tread the  
trackless moor,  
Lest he should fray the game ! Who made the winged  
fowl that sweep  
The measureless air, their property, whose close cold  
gripe doth keep  
The solid acres ? Not their sweat, or care, or know-  
ledge speedeth  
The crimson berries of the moor, on which the gorcock  
feedeth.  
The wandering air, the flowing stream, the self-sown  
grassy sod,

They bind with laws for their own gain.    Man made  
                 the laws, not God.

The flatterer of a perjured king, some hundred years ago,  
Wise in the slavish arts by which smooth baseness  
                 learns to grow,

Was titled earl or duke (the foolish world is ruled by  
                 names)

With a large sweep of roods, which now by printed  
                 act he claims,

Thrall'd to himself, and to his brood of spendthrift  
                 heirs for ever ;

While the poor labouring man, who to the great and  
                 general Giver

Stands in like right with lords, to feed soft luxury's  
                 pampered maw,

Must break the clod, and then be cast, by Britain's  
                 partial law

From the dear plot, which from the waste his sweatful  
                 toil redeemed.

And now the land, that once with groups of happy  
                 clansmen teemed,

Who with a kindly awe revered the clan's protecting  
                 head,

Lies desolate ; and stranger lords, by vagrant pleasure  
    led,  
Track the lone deer ; and, for the troops of stalwarth  
    kilted men,  
One farmer and one forester people the joyless  
    glen !

O Albin ! O my country ! thou art great among the  
    nations ;  
But thou hast sins : great glaring sins, that vex high  
    Heaven's patience.  
Thou lovest gold ; and, where the kind and human  
    heart should be,  
Thou'rt dry as ashes. Thou art proud ; to men of low  
    degree  
Thou dealest harsh unequal laws ; and, where thy  
    peers debate,  
Ermined and surpliced slaves of wealth let beggared  
    justice wait,  
While fools debauch thy nobler sense by cant of  
    Church and State.  
O Albin ! O my country ! O my dear-loved Highland  
    home,



The lust of gold hath ruined thee, the lust that ruined  
Rome ! ”

Thus spake the aged Highlandman, with bitter grief;  
and then,

With sober pace he wound his way, down the clear-  
watered glen.

As when a storm hath cleared the air with thunderous  
gusty war,

More calm of soul he slept that night, at Castleton of  
Braemar.



From rock, and stream, and lonely dell,  
Green fern, and purple heather bell,  
What quiet power with them doth dwell,  
To heal thy sorrow !

Or art thou one of haughty soul,  
Who, when the tide of life ran high,  
Like a steed rushing from control,  
Did'st mark, with dictatorial eye,  
Some proud position,  
And called it thine ; but, ere the bark,  
That was to thee salvation's ark,  
Had reached its harbour, He, whose will  
Sways every human chance and skill,  
Smote thy ambition  
With shipwreck. Prostrate now thou liest,  
The hunter late of lofty game,  
As one, to whom lowest and highest  
Of human fortunes is the same.  
Come hither, haughty heart, and see  
The thing that's brothered most to thee  
In all creation—

That pyramid grey, the glen's north Guard,  
Which with a million storms hath warred,  
Whose shattered peak and front is scarred  
                    With desolation.

There, if thou hast no kindlier food  
Than pride, to nurse thy bitter mood,  
Preach to thyself in solitude,

                    And be a man.

Though thy proud schemes be crushed to dust,  
Like the old granite's crumbled crust,

                    Hold to this plan,  
With the old mountains of the land,  
To stand and bear, and bear and stand,  
                    And be a man !

But, if not wholly thou art hard,  
Nor to each gracious inlet barred

                    Of gentle feeling,  
Attend ; amid this savage grandeur,  
There breathes a spirit not untender,  
                    With balmy healing  
Fraught to the chastened soul. Behold  
These giant-slabs of granite old,

That mail the mountain's shelvy side ;  
Even in their chinks the delicate pride  
Blooms of the starry Saxifrage.  
So rich is God. From age to age  
He in the least things and the lowest,  
Which scarce thine eye notes where thou goest,

His power displays ;  
Not more in noon-day glory bright,  
Than in the worm, that shines by night

With living rays.  
This Goat-fell, king of Arran's hills,  
Though harsh he show, and hard, like thee,  
That scarce a stunted rowan tree  
Fringes his skirt ;—not the less he  
Is parent of a thousand rills,  
That, from his deep cells trickling free,  
Through beds of swelling verdure ooze,  
As soft and kind as summer dews,

When softest falling.  
Or look thou there, where, leaping wild  
From rock to rock the mountain-child  
With boisterous brawling,  
Swells to a river—wandering there

By the treeless pool so glassy fair,  
Where granite ruin paves the bed  
With rocky amber richly spread,  
Even in that thin and loamless brook,  
The mountain-trout, from nook to nook  
All nimbly glancing,  
I spied ; there too was life ; and there  
Was joy entrancing,  
Which full life ever brings. Not bare  
Of joy is Goat-fell's barest spot ;  
Nor bare art thou, if thou wilt not  
Hug thee in self-nursed proud despair.  
Here, where hoar Chaos seems to hold  
A remnant of his empire old,  
And with gashed brow and stony eyes,  
The primal Beauty shattered lies,  
In blank prostration ;  
Even here the living God doth lurk,  
On death's foundation  
Who never tires to pile the work  
Of new creation.

Trust thou to Him ; and, if the rod

Smites thee from heaven, bend thou to God.

Amid these girdling mountains' grandeur

Feel thyself small, and freely render

Thy heart to Him. Thou need'st not seek

Far here, far there ; let Nature speak ;

And, if thou feel'st a burden, pour,

Like yon young torrent gushing o'er,

The free repentance :

Thus His full Mercy's gracious store

With liberal dash thy guilt shall score,

And blot the sentence.

Thou with mild wisdom softened then,

From lone Glen-Rosa's rocky glen

Shalt go to-morrow ;

Bearing, from Rosa's mountains hoar,

The ancient soul-subduing lore

Of sacred sorrow.

## A SABBATH MEDITATION IN ARRAN.

THE Sabbath bells are travelling o'er the hill ;  
The gentle breeze across the fresh-reaped fields  
Blows fitful ; scarcely, on the broad smooth bay,  
With full white-gleaming sail, the slow ship moves ;  
Thin float the clouds ; serene the mountain stands ;  
And all the plain in hallowed beauty lies.  
God of the Sabbath, on Thy holy day  
'Tis meet to praise Thee ! In the high-domed fane,  
Glorious with all the legendary pomp  
Of pictured saints, where skilful singers swell  
The curious chant, or on the lonely hill,  
Where, on grey cliff and purple heather, shines  
The shadowless sun at noon, Thou hear'st alike.  
Vainly the narrow wit of narrow men  
Within the walls which priestly lips have blest,  
In the fixed phrases of a formal creed,  
Would crib Thy presence ; Thou art more than all



The shrines that hold Thee ; and our wisest creeds  
Are but the lispings of a forward child,  
To spell the Infinite. Kings have drawn the sword,  
Lawyers have wrangled, to declare Thy being ;  
And convocations of high-mitred men  
The foaming vials of sacerdotal wrath  
Outpoured, and, with tempestuous proud conceit,  
Shook the vast world about a phrase to name Thee,  
In vain. Thou, like the thin impassive air,  
Dost cheat the grasp of subtlest-thoughted sage ;  
And half our high theology is but  
The shadow, which man's poor and clouded ken  
Hath cast across Thy brightness. I would sing  
Thy praise with humble heart, and, like the lyre  
Wind-swept, the comings of Thy breath would wait,  
To wake my rapture. Lift up your heads, ye hills,  
And nod His praise, ye sharp far-stretching lines  
Of crags storm-shattered, and ye jagged peaks  
Sky-cleaving ! you His mighty power upshot  
From the red ocean of His nethermost fire,  
In primal ages : there in form ye lay,  
In seething lakes, your molten masses huge,  
In turbid waves, with inorganic roll,

---

Far-pulsing through the dark abysmal space  
Of chaos ; thence His word creative hove  
Your marshalled ridges ; rank on rank ye rose,  
Granite and gneiss, and every ordered kind  
That careful science counts ; the giant frame  
Of this fair world, of peace-enfolden vales  
Storm-fronting fence, and bulwark ever sure.  
Ye mountain torrents, with far-sweeping foam,  
Ye leaping cataracts, and deep-swirling pools,  
Ye streams with the full-gathered grandeur rolling  
Of countless rills, from huge far-sundered Alps,  
Ye waters, with your thousand voices, praise  
The mighty Lord ! He of your sleepless floods  
Is the unsleeping soul. All motion comes  
From Him. Thou ocean, with thy living belt  
Girdling the globe, whether serene, as now,  
Thou liest, licking with an innocent ripple  
The feet o' the green-throned isles, or, like a spurred  
And furious charger, wild from coast to coast  
Drivest far-sounding—thou, in all thy changes,  
Art full of God ; yea, all Thy works, O Lord,  
Are full of Thee ! and who is dull to these  
Shall from the teaching of the schools come back

With blinder blindness. He shall mount in vain  
 His telescope, to spy Thee in the clouds,  
 Who in green herb and starry flower, beneath  
 His vagrant foot, hath failed to see and love  
 Thy manifest beauty. O make clear my sense  
 Thou great Revealer, to the grand array  
 Of open mysteries that encompass round  
 Our daily walk with Godhead, that no vain  
 And wordy fool may cheat my facile ear  
 With echoed volleys of man's crude conceit,  
 Misnamed God's thunder ! From Thyself direct  
 Thy secret comes to all, whom Thou shalt deem  
 Worthy to find it. Councils, doctors, priests,  
 Are but the signs that point us to the spring  
 Whence flow Thy living waters ; and, alas !  
 Too oft with wavering, or with cowardly hand  
 Back-turned, they point. Teach Thou my stablished  
                   soul  
 To seek Thy teaching, Lord, and trust in Thee.

The generations of uncounted men  
 Have hymned Thy praises, Lord. Their stammering  
                   tongues

With monster'd doctrine magnified the power  
Of Him, whose vastness they were fain to grasp,  
But could not. Even the folly of the fool  
Shall praise Thee, Lord. Thou hast a place for all.  
The wicked and the weak are but the steps,  
Whereon the wise shall mount, to see Thy face ;  
And mighty churches, and high-vaunted faiths,  
Are but the schools, wherein Thy centuries train  
The infant peoples to the manly reach  
Of pure devotion ; and most wise are they,  
Who hear one hymn of varied truth through all  
The harmonious discord of strange witnesses—  
Prophets and martyrs, priests and meek-eyed saints,  
And rapt diviners, with imperfect tongue,  
Babbling Thy praises. Egypt's brutish gods,  
Dog-faced, hawk-headed, crocodile, and cat,  
Snake-eating ibis, and the spotted bull,  
Not without apt significance did type  
Thy severed functions to a sense-bound race.  
In sea and sky, green tree, and flowing stream,  
In flying bird, and creeping beast, they found  
Pictorial speech, and speaking signs of what  
They crudely guessed of Thee. To clearer Greeks

Old Uranus, and primal Titans strong,  
And supreme Jove, with dark and thunderous locks,  
Throned like a king, with sceptre in his hand,  
And ministrant eagle, spake Thy mighty power  
With awful grace. Each seized a part of Thee,  
And, with a fond assurance, deemed to hold  
Thy wide Infinity in earthly bonds  
For human needs. Nor less the Christian priest  
Portentous erred, when with rash hand he clutched  
The awful Triune symbol, and defined  
The immeasurable Majesty Supreme  
With subtle phrase and scientific rule,  
And with strong fence of wiry logic barred  
Thy bristling name, from touch of thought profane ;  
Then, from a throne high-seated, and girt round  
With triple-tiered presumption, grasped Thy bolt,  
Sported Thy thunder, and with Thy best friends  
Filled a far-dreaded Hell, that he might seem  
A god on Earth, whom awe-struck, grovelling men  
Might see, and feel, and handle. The pale monk,  
Wasting his flesh within a cold damp cell,  
And straining his dull vision, till he saw  
God's features, in the strange putrescent light

Of his own sick imaginings—this man caught  
A glimpse of Thee, and, with such fiery haste  
Did hug Thee, and with prostrate worship fell,  
That nevermore his head he dared to lift  
Erect, and with proud-sweeping glance survey  
The free-sown wealth of Thy broad-blooming world,  
Man's privilege.—On so nice a pivot turns  
True wisdom ; here an inch, or there, we swerve  
From the just balance ; by too much we sin,  
And half our errors are but truths unpruned.

The errors of Thy creatures praise Thee, Lord.  
Not they who err are damned ; but who, being wrong,  
In obdurate persistency to err  
Refuse all bettering. Hope for such is none,  
Which lives for all, who flounder boldly on  
Through quaggy bogs, till firmer footing found  
Gives grateful prospect. One Deceiver haunts  
The hearts of faithless men ; his name is FEAR.  
O Thou, who ridest glorious through the skies,  
In thunder or in sunshine strong the same,  
The Almighty builder of this radiant whole  
Whose brightness blinds star-eyed philosophy,

Whose vastness makes our staggered intellect beg  
For utterance vainly—Father of all Power,  
Eternal Fount of liberty and life,  
Free, measureless, unspent—if e'er my voice  
Rose to Thy throne, in reverent truthful prayer,  
Slay me this demon, yellow Fear, that maims  
The arm of enterprise, nips the bud of hope,  
And freezes the great ocean of our life,  
That should run riot in the praise of Thee,  
With wave on wave of high heroic deeds.  
O may this Sabbath, with its gentle dews  
Shed by Thy Spirit on my chastened soul,  
Revive the blighted bud of thought, and lift  
This low-crushed life into a mighty tree,  
Wide-armed and waving with fair summer fruits  
Exuberant-clustered !—May all Sabbaths be  
A ripe and mellow season to my thought,  
Lovely as golden Autumn's purple eve,  
Genial as sleep, whence the tired limb refreshed  
Leaps to new action, and appointed toil,  
With steady hope, sure faith, and sober joy.

## GENERAL.

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### BONNIE BLACKWATER.

BONNIE Blackwater,  
'Neath the mountain's brow  
Roaring and brawling and swirling with glee,  
Round by the roots of the red rowan tree,  
Where the plumes of the fern weave a chaplet for thee ;  
Whence comest thou ?

I'm the Blackwater,  
Born in the sky,  
My mother the mist, and she fed me with dew ;  
In the little black tarn to stature I grew,  
Which the men who love me call Loch Duhh ;  
Thence come I.



Bonnie Blackwater,  
Whither goest thou ?

By the old grey crag that nods o'er thee,  
By the broad-browed Ben that slopes to thee,  
By the purple brae, and the bonnie green lea,  
Whither goest thou ?

Thou Saxon stranger,  
With mild blue eye,  
By the crag, and the brae, and the bonnie green lea,  
I wend, and I bend, and I swirl with glee  
To the long blue loch that runs up from the sea ;  
Thither go I.

Bonnie Blackwater,  
And is it then so ?  
And wilt thou be lost in the wide, wide sea,  
Far from the crag, and the brae, and the lea,  
Lost to the mountain, and hid from me  
In ocean's flow ?

Thou mild-eyed stranger,  
It is not so ;  
From the sea fine vapours rise,  
Where the white cloud sails, and the light bird flies,  
They float me back to my native skies ;  
Thither I go. ,

## HIGHLAND INNS.

### I.

THE age is grown too vast : a monster plan  
Must herald every sounding step it takes ;  
No will counts singly, and pretentious man  
Is nothing'd by the huge machines he makes.  
I love small things—a little bird that sings,  
A little flower beside a wimpling brook,  
A little child with light imaginings,  
A little hour lent to a thoughtful book.  
But of all little things I chiefly prize,  
On a lone moor, a little Highland Inn,  
Where, amid misty Bens and scowling skies,  
And the unsleeping torrent's sleepy din,  
A little maid attends with ready smiles  
The foot-worn guest, and blazing faggots piles.

## HIGHLAND INNS.

### II.

More high-tier'd inns !—and shall I ever be  
Pursued by London pomp and London flare ?  
Enter who will, this place is not for me,  
Who love a lowly roof and simple fare.  
Pile palaces for kings, where man to man  
Makes of his wealth theatric proud display ;  
But in the face of Nature's Titan plan  
These pompous toys should blush themselves  
away.  
Give me—enough for comfort and for ease—  
A low white house that peeps into the glen,  
An open moor, a clump of sheltering trees,  
And a few kindly words from kindly men :  
These give—and, that the hours may smoothly pass,  
A genial friend, and a well-tempered glass.

## THE HIGHLAND MINISTER.

WHEN London brewers track the Scottish deer,  
And lords breed sheep, who once commanded men,  
Whom do the scanty peoplers of the glen  
With faithful love, and service true revere ?  
I know him well : while lairds beyond the sea  
Scatter their gold, and factors rack the glen,  
He stands a messenger from God to men,  
Sole priest and king, sole friend and father he.  
Such ministry God's gospel gave, when first  
Love struck the bonds from Sin's enthralled slaves,  
As here some wreck of kindly care it saves  
From grasping hands and hearts with hardness curst.  
“ *Not yours, but you,*” the great Apostle said ;  
Now gain is good, and all things are a trade !

## THE HIGHLAND MANSE.

IF men were free to take, and wise to use  
The fortunes richly strewn by kindly chance,  
Then kings and mighty potentates might choose  
To live and die lords of a Highland manse.  
For why? Though that which spurs the forward mind  
Be wanting here, the high-perched glittering prize,  
The bliss that chiefly suits the human kind  
Within this bounded compass largely lies—  
The healthful change of labour and of ease,  
The sober inspiration to do good,  
The green seclusion, and the stirring breeze,  
The working hand leagued with the thoughtful mood;  
These things, undreamt by feverish-striving men,  
The wise priest knows who rules a Highland glen.

## THE LADY WHO LOVES THE HIGHLANDS.

### I.

ADVENTUROUS men I've known the boldest born  
In brawny Britain or in fiery France,  
To face the pestilence, scale the Matterhorn,  
Or through the battle's iron hail to dance.  
But a frail woman with so stout a heart  
To brave the billows and explore the glens  
I never knew, as she who claims a part  
In my small song piped in the land of Bens.  
She on the wings of sacred duty flies  
With shepherd's care to bless untended flocks ;  
And, like an angel missioned from the skies,  
They greet her coming from the old grey rocks :  
Poor island-dwellers by the lonely sea,  
Whom all forget but God in heaven and she !

## THE LADY WHO LOVES THE HIGHLANDS.

### II.

Who loves the Highlands?—many love to shoot  
The dun-plumed grouse on the broad-shouldered  
Ben ;  
And 'tis a kingly sport will none dispute  
To track the red-deer through the treeless glen.  
But I know one who loves the Highlands more  
Than all who start the grouse or watch the deer,  
The first to light on lone unfriended shore  
With helping hand, and words of kindly cheer ;  
A woman, but whom manful purpose mails,  
Of English blood, but through the Celtic seas  
With torch of truth in venturous skiff she sails  
From isle to isle, not studious of her ease.  
Brave maid ! thee following where Columba trod  
The angels know who keep the book of God.



## THE BOULDER.

THOU huge grey stone upon the heath,  
With lichens crusted well,  
I marvel much, if thou found breath,  
What story thou would'st tell.  
Oft wandering o'er the birch-grown hill,  
To hear the wild winds moan,  
I wonder still what chance or skill  
Hath pitched thee here alone.

Where wert thou when Sire Adam first  
Drew his mischanceful breath,  
And in the bowers of bliss was cursed  
With everlasting death,  
Then when the damned fiend, who loves  
The mask of snake and toad,  
Crept into Paradisian groves,  
And stole Eve's heart from God?

Thee in some seaward glen, I ween,  
On sharp Loffodin's shore,  
In frozen folds of gleaming green  
The giant glacier bore.  
Then down the steep it harshly slid,  
Till, loosen'd from the high land,  
With wrench enorm its compact form  
Was launch'd, a floating island,

Into the Arctic deep. And thou,  
In its stark bosom buried,  
Through seas which huge Leviathans plough,  
To this South strand wert hurried.  
Then, from its cold close gripe unbound  
By summer's permeant breath,  
Thy wandering bulk a station found  
On this wide sandy heath.

And here thy watch hath been, God knows  
How long, and what a strange  
Masque of Time's motley-shifting shows  
Hath known thee without change.

Seas thou hast seen to dry land turned, .  
And dry land turned to seas,  
And fiery cones that wildly burned,  
Where flocks now feed at ease.

By thee the huge-limbed breathing things,  
Crude Earth's portentous race,  
Passed, and long lizard-shapes with wings  
Swept o'er thy weathered face.  
To thee first came man's jaded limb  
From Eastern Babel far ;  
Around thee rose the Druid's hymn,  
And the cry of Celtic war.

By thee the Roman soldier made  
The mountain-cleaving road,  
The Saxon boor beside thee strayed,  
The lordly Norman strode.  
The Papal monk thy measure took ;  
The proud priest triple-crowned  
Mumbled a blessing from his book,  
And claimed the holy ground.

By thee the insolent Edward passed,  
    When mad with eager greed,  
A bridge of law-spun lies he cast  
    Across the Scottish Tweed.  
And thou that vengeful day didst know,  
    When strong with righteous scorn  
Young Freedom rose, and smote the foe,  
    At glorious Bannockburn.

Thou saw'st, when 'neath thy hoary shade  
    Upon the old brown sod  
The plaided preacher sate, and made  
    His fervent prayer to God,  
What time men tried by courtly art  
    To trim, and craft of kings,  
The faith that soars from a people's heart,  
    And flaps untutored wings.

Thou saw'st, from out old unkempt bowers,  
    Huge peopled cities rise,  
And merchant kings with stately towers  
    Invade the troubled skies.

Thick rose the giant vents, that mar  
    Heaven's lustrous blue domain,  
And whirling wheel and hissing car  
    Disturb thy silent reign.

And thou—but what thou yet may'st see  
    The pious Muse withholds ;  
The curious art be far from me,  
    To unroll Time's fateful folds.  
When Earth, that wheels on viewless wing,  
    Is twenty centuries older,  
Some bard, where Scotland was, shall sing  
    The story of the Boulder.

## SOLITUDE.

ALONE, alone, and all alone !

What could more lonely be ?

'Neath the mist-wove pall of a dull grey night,

On a treeless shore and bare ;

Nor wind's low sigh,

Nor sea-birds' cry,

Stirring the stagnant air ;

And only one dim beacon-light

Far-twinkling o'er the sea.

And the wave that raved but yesternight,

So blustering and so wild,

Is smooth and faint, and crestless quite,

And breaks on the sand as faint and slight

As the whispers of a child.

Alone, alone, and all alone,

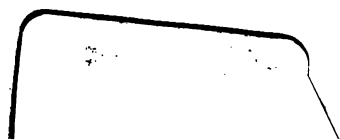
By the sad and silent sea,  
On one far-twinkling beacon-light  
I look out through the dull grey night,  
And only God with me !

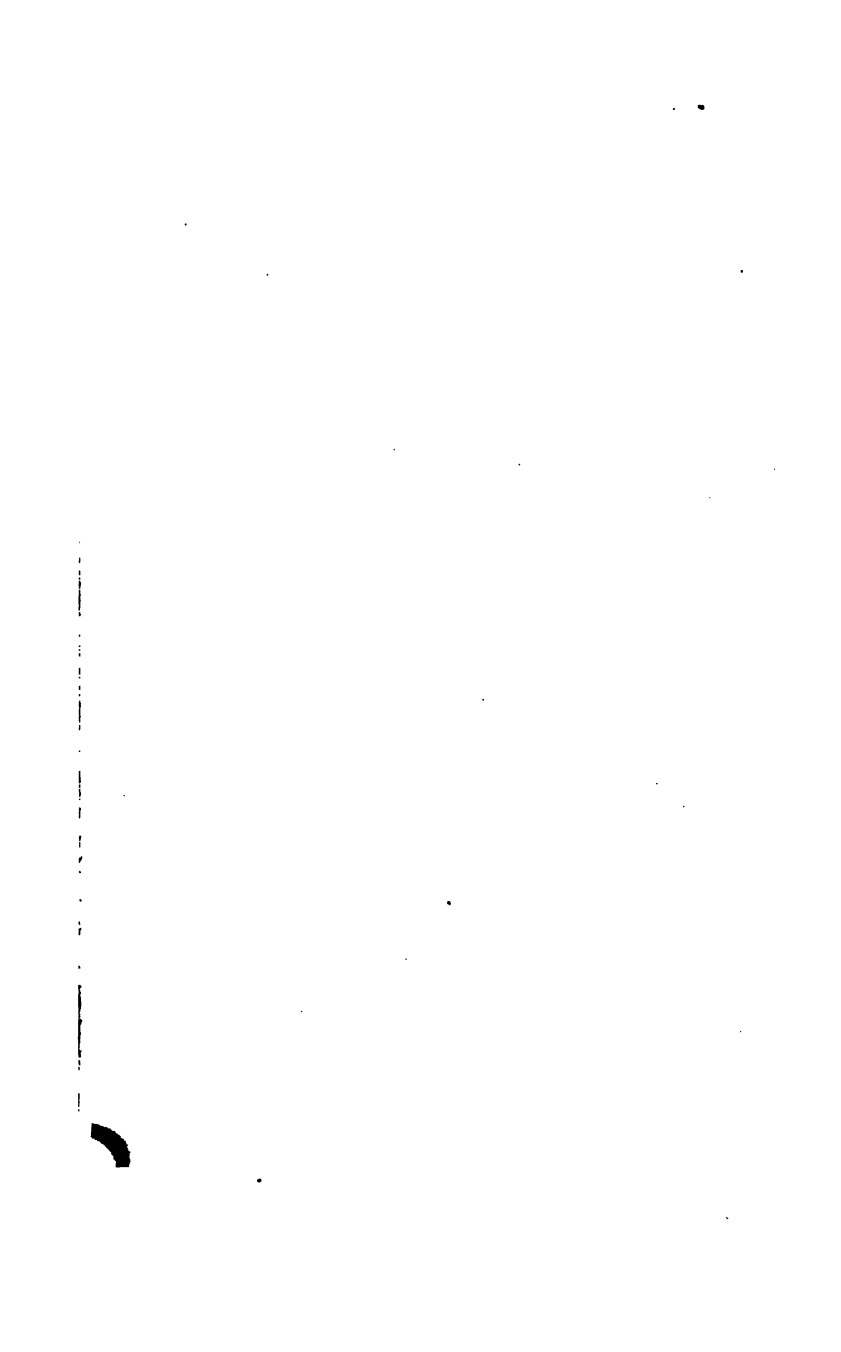
Nod o'er my troubled bed,  
And Labour's many-chambered homes,  
In straggling vastness, spread  
Their smoking lines. Thus, where I flow,  
The stream of being, growing as I grow,  
Floods to a tumult, and much-labouring man,  
Who, with my small beginnings, small began,  
Ends, where I end, and crowns his swelling plan.

THE END.

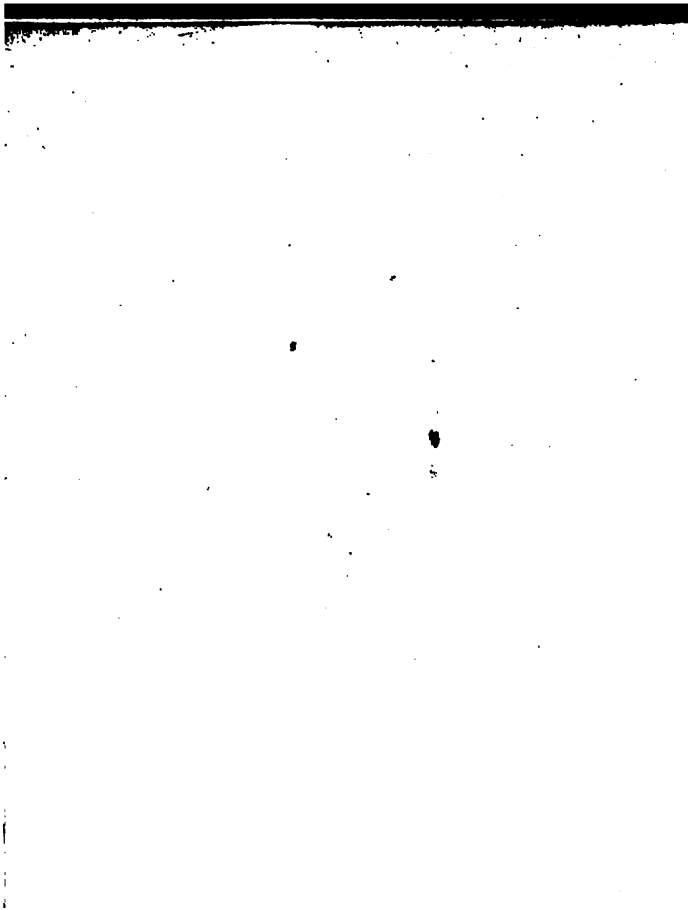














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